



GOURMET OF ANOTHER WORLD

BOOK 02

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Gourmet of Another World

(异世界的美食家)

by

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Synopsis

In a fantasy world where martial artists can split mountains and creeks with a wave of their hand and break rivers with a kick, there exists a little restaurant like this.

The restaurant isn't large, but it is a place where countless apex existences will rush into.

There, you can taste egg-fried rice made from phoenix eggs and dragon blood rice.

There, you can drink strong wine brewed from vermillion fruit and water from the fountain of life.

There, you can taste the barbecued meat of a ninth grade supreme beast sprinkled with black pepper.

What? You want to abduct the chef? That's not going to happen, because there's a tenth grade divine beast, the Hellhound, lying at the entrance.

Oh, that chef also has a robotic assistant that killed a ninth grade supreme being with a single hand and a group of crazy women whose stomachs were conquered.

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Chapter 101: Is This Human Stupid?

"You want to eat this, right?"

Ouyang Xiaoyi said with a chuckle as she used her chopsticks to pick up a piece of Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs covered with amber-colored sauce and slightly wave it around Yang Chen's face.

At that moment, Yang Chen was already captivated by the intoxicating smell emanating from the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs. His eyes were unable to move away. The amber-colored luster of the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs was simply too alluring. He subconsciously felt his stomach was empty and could not help but want to have a taste.

"Go order it yourself if you want to eat! Hmph! This is mine!" When Ouyang Xiaoyi saw Yang Chen drooling, she immediately became overjoyed. She had a triumphant expression as she shoved the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs into her mouth in one bite. Her eyes curved into two adorable crescents.

Yang Chen was furious. He knew this brat was definitely up to no good. However, he really had to admit that the aroma was truly fragrant. He had never smelled anything as captivating or enticing before.

Yang Chen was thinking whether he should also order a serving of Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs, but he was hesitating since he already ordered Red Braised Meat. He gave up in the end. He decided to taste the Red Braised Meat first before making the choice. However, in order to resist the temptation, Yang Chen forced himself to look away from Ouyang Xiaoyi, who was enjoying the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs.

"Chew, chew." Ouyang Xiaoyi was amused as she watched Yang Chen who had closed his eyes so that he would not see the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs. She was elated in her mind as she chewed loudly on purpose. Since Yang Chen was unable to see, she was using sound

to entice him.

For Yang Chen, this was simply the most upsetting torture. It was even more upsetting than making him perform ten sets of kata out in the snow.

Nearby, Song Tao had been monitoring both of them. However, when he looked at the plate of Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs in front of Ouyang Xiaoyi, he could not help but swallow his saliva as well. The smell was simply too aromatic. Even though the rumors alleged the price of the dishes in the black-hearted store was ridiculously expensive, there was a reason for its pricing.

Unfortunately, a serving of Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs actually cost fifty crystals. When Song Tao imagined how fifty crystals would slip away from his pockets if he ordered the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs, he even lost his appetite for eating.

While withstanding the temptation of the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs, Yang Chen managed to endure until Bu Fang walked out of the kitchen. He became excited when he saw the plate of carnelian-like Red Braised Meat that was exuding a cloud of steam.

"Here's your Red Braised Meat, please enjoy your meal," Bu Fang calmly said. Compared to Yang Chen's eagerness, Bu Fang was easygoing.

Yang Chen's eyes were staring straight at the Red Braised Meat in front of him. The pieces of meat were translucent like carnelian and gave off an extremely beautiful red luster when placed under the lighting. It was exquisite like a piece of artwork and he could not bear to eat it.

However, the craving for food in his stomach conquered his appreciation for beauty in the end. Yang Chen grabbed his chopsticks and carefully picked up a piece of Red Braised Meat. As the chopsticks lightly clamped onto the piece of Red Braised Meat, a slightly translucent juice seeped out and a fragrance wafted into the air.

Placing the piece of meat in his mouth, a faint sweetness accompanied with the rich taste of meat instantly invaded and occupied his entire mouth. Yang Chen's whole body seemed to be wrapped by the flavor of the meat. The first layer of the venison was oily but not greasy. It was springy and the texture was extremely good. When Yang Chen reached the lean meat portion which should be firm, the tenderness and smoothness was outside of his expectations. The piece of meat entered his stomach with a gulp.

"It's... It's really delicious!" Yang Chen blankly muttered. He was looking at the plate of Red Braised Meat in disbelief. There was actually such a delicious Red Braised Meat in the world. Compared to the Braised Spirit Pork from the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant, the difference was like the distance between heaven and earth!

Just a single piece of meat was able to thoroughly subdue Yang Chen. Ouyang Xiaoyi's eyes became even more curved. She cheerfully picked up another piece of Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs and shoved it into her mouth. Her cheeks were bulging as she chewed on the meat.

"Hmph! I already told you earlier, the smelly boss' dishes are definitely the most delicious!"

Yang Chen smacked his lips. He felt as if he did not taste the Red Braised Meat just now, and so, he picked up another piece of meat and once more shoved it into his mouth. With a gulp, the piece of meat entered his stomach... Yang Chen's eyes widened in surprise. He picked up another piece of meat and blissfully shoved it into his mouth. With a gulp, the meat entered his stomach.

Thus, Yang Chen began to continuously pick up the pieces of meat and continuously shove them into his mouth. He was simply unable to stop himself. When Bu Fang was carrying out the Egg-Fried Rice, the entire plate of Red Braised Meat was gone.

"Here's your Egg-Fried Rice, please enjoy your meal," Bu Fang

said as he placed the Egg-Fried Rice that seemed to be exuding golden light in front of Song Tao.

Song Tao, who was already extremely tormented, picked up the porcelain spoon without saying anything and began scooping up the rice. The moment the spoon dug into the rice, the egg aroma and rice fragrance that was contained within instantly gushed out. Steam rose up and enveloped Song Tao's face, sending him into an euphoric state.

Even though the price of the Egg-Fried Rice was not considered expensive and the cooking method was simple, it was undeniable that the fragrance exuded by this simple dish was the strongest. The reason was the eggs by themselves were extremely aromatic when stir-fried.

No one could resist the Egg-Fried Rice's fragrance. Neither Song Tao nor Yang Chen could do it.

After eating a bite of Egg-Fried Rice, Song Tao was thoroughly captivated by it. He was continuously scooping the rice, chewing, and swallowing. He was completely subdued by the delicious flavor of the dish and forgot all about his objective for entering the store.

After a short while, the entire plate of Egg-Fried Rice was completely finished. The plate was licked clean and not even a single grain of rice was left.

"Delicious!" Song Tao placed the plate down and ran his tongue over his lips. He did not expect the Egg-Fried Rice to be so delicious. A single serving was simply not enough to satisfy him.

"Owner Bu, give me another serving of Egg-Fried Rice!" While facing such a delicious taste, even a fellow like Song Tao who was stingy by nature chose to compromise and decided to order another serving of Egg-Fried Rice.

"You'll have to order another dish. Since you've already ordered Egg-Fried Rice, you're not allowed to order it any more," Bu Fang

replied after giving him a glance.

Song Tao was startled for a moment and then remembered the rules written on the menu. He suddenly felt somewhat depressed... At that moment, only then did he suddenly remember that he was not there to have a meal. He was there to abduct Yang Chen and Ouyang Xiaoyi.

Therefore, Song Tao withstood the temptation and carefully took out a single crystal. He placed it on the table with a face filled with reluctance before turning around and leaving.

Bu Fang's face was filled with doubts as he watched Song Tao leaving. Didn't he say he was going to order another dish?

After leaving the store, Song Tao did not go far. He found a comfortable spot a few meters away from the entrance of the alleyway and squatted down. He did not dare to make a move within the store, but once they were outside... He would be able to instantly capture the two brats and then leave. At the very least... He could not let the supreme beast dog have the chance to make a move.

The miserable fate of his two subordinates that were sent flying was still fresh in his mind. He did not dare to let that supreme beast dog unleash its claws...

Heavy snow was unsteadily falling from the sky without warning. The imperial city was once again covered with a layer of snow.

Within the store, Yang Chen, who was still craving for more, ordered some more dishes and he was heartily enjoying his meal. On the other hand, Xiaoyi ordered a serving of warm Fish Head Tofu Soup and she was elatedly sipping the soup.

The two of them simply had no plans to leave.

At the entrance of the alleyway, Song Tao was squatting there without moving. His body was already covered with a thick layer

of white snow. Whenever he slightly moved his body, there would be snow falling off from him.

Lying at the entrance of the store, Blacky rolled its eyes. It was speechless for a moment because of Song Tao's behavior. It thought, "Is this human stupid?"

Song Tao was questioning his own normality as well... However, he had no other choice. In order to complete the mission, he could only make such a fearless sacrifice.

Qian Bao was wearing a brocade robe and a fox-skin overcoat. He was accompanied by a chef from the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant. When he reached the entrance of the alleyway, he spotted the shivering Song Tao, who was hiding within the alleyway. He immediately waved his hand away in disgust and said, "Where did this filthy beggar come from? Get lost, don't block the way."

When Song Tao heard those words, he immediately entered a daze. He was a sixth grade Battle-Emperor... He was actually being treated as a filthy beggar? Since when did he become this miserable?

Chapter 102: We Are Here Today To Consult You On Cutting Techniques

"What are you looking at? Are you not satisfied? Never seen a rich man before?"

Qian Bao was immediately upset when he noticed the filthy beggar squatting in the corner was actually glaring at him. He swung his fox-skin overcoat and coldly berated the beggar.

Song Tao was dumbfounded. He pursed his lips together and looked at Qian Bao. He wondered where in the world this fellow obtained the courage to behave arrogantly in front of him. Even though his current appearance was indeed rather miserable... Nevertheless, he was still a sixth grade Battle-Emperor!

The middle-aged chef standing behind Qian Bao glanced at Song Tao in disgust as well. He waved his hand away and said, "As expected of a store opened within an alleyway. No wonder there's not many people coming through here. It's all because of filthy beggars like this. They're simply ruining the appetite of customers."

"Master Zhao, as long as you're able to get back our restaurant's prestige, I'll immediately give you a thousand gold coins when we get back! I'll guarantee you a blissful Spring Festival!" Qian Bao gave Master Zhao a glance and began laughing. This Master Zhao was the most skilled in cutting techniques among the chefs of the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant.

Qian Bao knew that no one within his restaurant could produce dishes with a taste comparable to the dishes from the black-hearted store. Even though he had never tasted them before, since Bu Fang's store had obtained the former emperor's recognition, their standard would definitely be at the level of his restaurant's Roasted Flower Duck. Therefore, defeating the black-hearted store with taste was too difficult.

Since that was not possible, he could only try with cutting techniques. Therefore, Qian Bao brought along the chef that was the most skilled in cutting techniques within the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant.

A thousand gold coins! Master Zhao's eyes immediately lit up and the corners of his mouth widened into a large grin. A thousand gold coins was already a huge sum of money to him. He had to work an entire year in order to get this much.

"No problem, boss! Leave this to me! I'll definitely use my cutting techniques to viciously pare that little restaurant's face! I'll let them understand what a real chef is!" Master Zhao reliably said while patting his chest.

"Alright, I am counting on you," Qian Bao said with a laugh.

After that, the two of them walked past Song Tao in revulsion and intended to enter the alleyway.

However, they might not care about Song Tao but the latter was displeased about them. Within the black-hearted store, Song Tao felt extremely vexed because of that supreme beast dog. After leaving the store, there were actually two blind fools that dared to prance around in front of him. They were even taunting him and treating him as a beggar.

When have you ever seen a beggar that was a sixth grade Battle-Emperor?

When Qian Bao felt a hand pressing down on his shoulder, he was startled for a moment. Then he felt his entire body being suppressed by an imposing presence and he was completely unable to move.

"What the! You filthy beggar, what are you trying to do? Don't push your luck! Remove your filthy hand!" When Master Zhao saw that Song Tao's hand was placed on Qian Bao's shoulder, he immediately started shouting and stretched his hand out toward

Song Tao.

Song Tao's body shook for a moment as true energy instantly burst forth and blew away the snow that covered his body. His hair was fluttering and his clothes violently flapped under the outflow of his true energy. His eyes were sharp as a knife.

Master Zhao's hand that was just stretched out uncontrollably trembled. Damn... How did a filthy beggar suddenly turn into a cultivator?

Song Tao gave Master Zhao a wide-eyed glare and shouted, "Get lost!"

His voice violently surged forward like rolling thunder.

Master Zhao immediately took several steps backward in fear. Both of his legs were trembling. This presence... was too terrifying.

Even though Master Zhao had a cultivation level as well, he was only a second-grade Battle-Master. When faced with the terrifying aura of a sixth grade Battle-Emperor, he was close to wetting his pants in terror.

On the other hand, Qian Bao was still quite calm. He was someone who had seen the world after all, so his behavior was not as pathetic as Master Zhao.

"This lowly person failed to recognize such a great person. It is the fault of this lowly person for offending your excellency. I am the owner of the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant. I wish to set up a banquet for your excellency to express my apologies! Would your excellency please calm down..." Qian Bao said with a trembling body.

Song Tao was going to slap these two fellows to death at first. However, when he heard Qian Bao was the owner of the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant, he suddenly stopped his descending hand and then dispersed the true energy.

"Since they're from the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant... forget it,"

Song Tao thought.

"Hmph, if it wasn't for the fact that you're from the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant, I would've already slapped both of you to death!" Song Tao coldly said. The true energy swirling around him gradually dissipated and then he regained his serene appearance. "I heard the two of you saying that you're going to that black-hearted store in order to challenge Owner Bu, right?"

Qian Bao was startled for a moment before he hurriedly nodded his head and said, "That's right! We're indeed going there to challenge Owner Bu... However, if your excellency does not permit, we'll immediately turn back."

Even though Master Zhao was agonizing over the loss of the thousand gold coins, after thinking for a while, his life was far more important. Therefore, he was nodding his head as well.

"What are you going back for? Go compete with him! You must compete! Furthermore, you must compete with him outside!" Song Tao's eyes did a little turn before he said with a sneer.

Qian Bao and Master Zhao were both surprised for a moment. The two of them looked into each other's eyes. So, this filthy beggar... Oh, his excellency was not someone from the black-hearted store?

"Aren't the two of you going to challenge Owner Bu in cutting techniques? Why don't you set the location of the match right here at the alleyway's entrance? Wouldn't this be more fair and just?" Song Tao said.

"This... What's the difference? It's even harder to perform cutting techniques in the cold," Master Zhao silently complained.

"Just do what I tell you to do. Do you have any complaints?" Song Tao coldly said as he gave Master Zhao a glare. He did not dare to act impudent within the store because they had a supreme beast dog. However, what was stopping him from being arrogant in

front of two ants?

Qian Bao could only helplessly accept Song Tao's decision in the end. Then, the two of them headed toward Bu Fang's store step by step while under Song Tao's watchful eyes.

Song Tao was feeling satisfied by his own wit. "Heh, I might not be able to do anything within the store. However, things are much simpler if we're here at the entrance of the alleyway. Even if that supreme beast dog intervenes, I'll still be able to escape! Furthermore, I'll be able to snatch away those two brats as well!"

Qian Bao rubbed his hands together and expelled a cloud of white breath as he stepped into Bu Fang's store. As he entered the store, it was like stepping into a warm world. While snow was swirling outside, the interior of the store was warm and cozy.

A rich fragrance was slowly wafting within the store and Qian Bao was instantly attracted by the fragrance of the fish soup and the mellowness of the meaty aroma. He could not help but swallow his saliva. As he had expected... Only the smell of the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant's Roasted Flower Duck could match this fragrance.

Master Zhao was a chef as well. The moment he smelled the aroma of the dishes, he knew he would definitely lose if they competed in cooking. He would lose without even having a chance to retaliate. The difference in level between them was too large.

"Hmm? It's you? What are you having?" Bu Fang recognized Qian Bao. Previously, he went to the latter's restaurant and found fault with their dishes from the first floor till the third floor. He criticized their dishes to the point where they had no merit to speak of. He was naturally familiar with their owner.

He did not think that Qian Bao would actually come into his store...

"Owner Bu should still remember me, right? On that day, Owner

Bu's evaluation of Immortal Phoenix Restaurant's dishes has really allowed me to receive a lot of benefits. The taste of many of our dishes have indeed improved after undergoing revisions. However, the saying goes that we should reciprocate politeness. That's why... I brought our Immortal Phoenix Restaurant's number one chef here today to consult you."

Qian Bao's words were quite pompous, but the meaning was actually quite simple: We're here today to find fault. Since you found my fault, I must find yours. Otherwise, we'll lose our face!

"Consult?" Bu Fang expressionlessly glanced toward Qian Bao as well as that Master Zhao standing behind Qian Bao. He pursed his lips and then said, "If the level of your chef is the same as last time, then I won't accept, because the two of you don't have the qualification."

"We don't have the qualification..." The muscles on Master Zhao's face twitched for a moment. However, he was unable to refute either. The rich fragrance that pervaded the air was causing him to lose confidence.

However, compared to Master Zhao's forlorn appearance, Qian Bao looked much more calm. He looked around the store's interior and said with a grin, "Owner Bu, we're not here to consult you on cooking. We're here to... consult you on cutting techniques!"

Master Zhao's heart trembled for a moment, then he proudly raised his head and haughtily said, "That's right! We're here today to consult Owner Bu on your cutting techniques!"

Chapter 103: Young Man, Use Your Eye-Blinding Cutting Techniques To Teach Him How To Be A Better Person

Master Zhao was very confident. He had extraordinary confidence over his cutting techniques. There was no reason other than the fact that he had spent over a dozen years on practicing cutting techniques alone. Ever since he was an apprentice chef, he spent every single day continuously waving around a kitchen knife and handling ingredients.

He could stand other people saying his dishes tasted bad but he could not stand anyone saying his cutting technique was bad, because it was an insult to the time he spent on practicing his cutting techniques.

It was precisely because of this confidence and solid cutting techniques that Master Zhao stood out among the many capable chefs of the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant and was eventually chosen by Qian Bao to challenge Bu Fang.

Master Zhao haughtily looked at Bu Fang. He did not think the youngster before him was superior to him in cutting techniques. Cutting techniques not only needed talent but also required constant effort, and Master Zhao felt he was someone who possessed talent and had made constant effort.

Meanwhile, Ouyang Xiaoyi and Yang Chen had already finished eating their food and were curiously watching this stimulating scene unfold. Ouyang Xiaoyi was very excited as she thought, "Last time, the smelly boss almost wrecked the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant. Now, they're upset and came for revenge!"

This little brat was purely watching from the point of view of a spectator. Her large eyes blinked as she looked at Bu Fang. She wanted to know how the smelly boss would handle this matter.

Honestly speaking, Bu Fang was truly not interested in stuff like challenges and learning from one another. He only wanted to peacefully cook dishes, run his business, earn crystals, and raise his cultivation level... His wish was that pure and simple. There was not much complicated things mixed within.

Previously, if the system had not given him a mission, Bu Fang would not have even bothered to step into the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant.

"Compete in cutting techniques? Why do I have to compete with you? Not interested." Bu Fang expressionlessly pursed his lips together as he turned around and headed for the kitchen. He could not be bothered to pay any attention to Qian Bao and Master Zhao.

Qian Bao was surprised for a moment. He did not expect Bu Fang's refusal. However, his eyes soon lit up as he thought, "He's refusing? Doesn't that mean he's lacking in confidence? This Owner Bu is definitely inept at cutting techniques... Otherwise, why would he refuse our challenge? He refused since he knew he would lose!"

The more Qian Bao thought this was the case, the more excited he became, and the more he could not let Bu Fang refuse his challenge because he felt he had discovered Bu Fang's weakness.

"Owner Bu... Aren't you being a little unreasonable right now? When you came over to find fault at the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant, did I ever say a single no? I magnanimously allowed you to sample our dishes. Today, I came here with the intentions of learning from each other, yet you refused my invitation. This is a little unfair. Are you perhaps lacking in confidence? Are you self-conscious that your cutting techniques are inferior to my chef's?" Qian Bao said with a smile while his facial muscles were squeezed together.

His voice contained an extremely provoking tone, which was capable of causing any listener to become very uncomfortable. At

the very least, Ouyang Xiaoyi, who was originally having fun watching the scene, became so exasperated that her teeth itched. She thought, "What do you mean by unfair? What do you mean by lacking in confidence? Would Owner Bu be lacking in confidence with his skills?"

"I am not lacking in confidence or being unfair. Rather, even if we're competing in cutting techniques, your chef is not qualified to compete with me. Since he isn't qualified, why would I compete with him?" Bu Fang stopped walking, turned his head and indifferently said. From his tone, not even a single trace of anger could be detected. It was as if he was just stating the truth.

Master Zhao was immediately angered. He thought to himself, "I am not qualified? I am the most skilled person in cutting techniques within the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant, yet you're actually saying that I'm not qualified?"

Then, Master Zhao coldly taunted him, "Brat, you're really cocky. Unfortunately, you won't become better at cutting techniques by being cockier. We'll only find out whether or not I am qualified after we compete. Deciding whether I am qualified or not, who do you think you are!"

Qian Bao timely came out with a smile and said, "How about this, Owner Bu. Last time, the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant's reputation was tarnished by you. This time, you can't expect us to be at a disadvantage as well. As long as you admit your cutting techniques are inferior to our Immortal Phoenix Restaurant's chef, we'll write off this matter. How about it?"

Bu Fang indifferently looked at Qian Bao. Was this fellow an idiot? He already said that the chef was not qualified to challenge his cutting techniques, yet this Qian Bao still wanted him to acknowledge his cutting techniques was inferior. What a joke.

Bu Fang's expression became cold as well. Since they wanted to seek their own deaths, he would fulfill their wish.

"Abrupt mission: Accept the cutting technique challenge from the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant chef arranged by Qian Bao and completely dominate your opponent. (As the saying goes, a scholar prefers death to humiliation. A chef's cutting techniques must not be disgraced. Young man, use your eye-blinding cutting techniques to teach him how to be a better person!)

"Mission reward: Meteor Cutting Technique advancement."

Just as Bu Fang was about to give a response, the system's solemn voice resounded within Bu Fang's mind. Even though the system was solemn as always, Bu Fang seemed to be able to feel the anger contained within the system's mission.

With a trace of strangeness on his deadpan face, Bu Fang indifferently glanced toward Qian Bao and Master Zhao. Since even the system issued him with the mission, he would really be unreasonable if he did not accept their challenge.

Since that was the case... then he would accept.

"Alright, I accept. However, wait until my opening hours is over," Bu Fang indifferently said.

The smile on Qian Bao's face froze and slowly disappeared. He seriously asked, "Owner Bu, are you accepting our challenge?"

Bu Fang expressionlessly nodded.

"Then, is it alright for me to decide the location of the match?" Qian Bao asked. He still remembered Song Tao's instructions. When he recalled the terrifying aura he felt from Song Tao, he decided to follow Song Tao's orders.

"Up to you." Bu Fang could not be bothered to say anything else. He turned around and stepped into the kitchen.

Master Zhao and Qian Bao looked into each other eyes, and

revealed a hint of triumph on their faces at the same time. Then, Qian Bao turned toward the kitchen and shouted, "Then, Owner Bu, I'll be leaving first. Once your opening hours has ended, I'll send someone to make arrangements for the challenge."

"Alright," Bu Fang's voice coldly drifted out of the kitchen.

Qian Bao and Master Zhao immediately left Bu Fang's store in high spirits. They had to prepare the stuff needed during the challenge.

Once they left, Ouyang Xiaoyi ran toward the kitchen window and asked, "Smelly boss, did you really agree with competing in cutting techniques? Is your cutting techniques... alright?"

Bu Fang raised his head and gave Ouyang Xiaoyi a glance. Then, a wisp of green smoke encircled his hand and an unassuming kitchen appeared. As Bu Fang's fingers nimbly started moving, that kitchen knife immediately wandered about his hand as if it was alive...

Ouyang Xiaoyi had never seen someone manipulate a kitchen knife in such a gorgeous manner before. Her eyes were almost popping out of her head. She suddenly felt her worry from just now was simply a joke... The smelly boss was a demonic genius with superb culinary skills. How could his cutting techniques be weak?

She could almost imagine the results of the coming match. The expression of the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant's owner would definitely become extremely ugly... She looked forward to the smelly boss slapping other people's face the most!

The opening hours soon ended. Both Ouyang Xiaoyi and Yang Chen were not in a hurry to leave. They were looking forward to this challenge.

Qian Bao's efficiency was still quite good. After a while, someone came and informed Bu Fang about the location of the match.

However, the location startled Bu Fang for a moment.

"At the entrance of the alleyway?" Bu Fang puzzledly asked.

"Yes." The person who came to inform him nodded with absolute certainty.

Without saying anything, Bu Fang put on a fur overcoat and then walked out of the store.

At that moment, the entrance of the alleyway was buzzing with activity. The alleyway's entrance, where the pedestrian traffic was usually scarce, was surrounded by a large crowd. There were two large tables with various ingredients on top of them.

Master Zhao, wearing a chef uniform, was standing in front of one of the tables. On his table, there was a large knife rack filled with various kitchen knives and every single knife was glinting with sharpness.

Chapter 104: Let Us Compete By Slicing A Hundred Radishes

Ouyang Xiaoyi and Yang Chen were blindly following after Bu Fang as they looked toward the entrance of the alleyway that was buzzing with activity. The large crowd blocking the entrance was making Ouyang Xiaoyi excited.

This Immortal Phoenix Restaurant's owner was indeed different. He actually brought so many people to spectate this match. Was he planning to let the entire imperial city know?

Qian Bao was beaming as he stood at the entrance of the alleyway and watched the spectators in the surroundings. He was ecstatic that so many people were there. Once the news that a chef from the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant had defeated the owner of the black-hearted store was spread, the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant shall become even more renowned within the imperial city. When that time came, there would be more and more customers dining at the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant.

"Oh my, Owner Bu, you finally came. Look, so many people are paying close attention to this match. Try not to go easy on us." Qian Bao's face was full of smiles as he spoke to Bu Fang.

Bu Fang gave him a meaningful glance. He understood Qian Bao's intentions very well. Qian Bao wanted to make use of him as a stepping stone to make the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant even more famous.

There was actually nothing wrong with this idea because Bu Fang's store had recently become extremely well-known within the imperial city. If the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant managed to obtain victory during the match, its reputation would reach a whole new level.

However, this decision was made by Qian Bao under the

assumption that Master Zhao's cutting techniques would definitely defeat Bu Fang's.

Bu Fang nodded and walked up to one of the tables. On the table, there were many fresh ingredients. Large snowflakes unsteadily descended from the skies and landed on these ingredients.

When Master Zhao saw Bu Fang, he drew out a broad-headed kitchen knife in an attempt to intimidate him. That shiny kitchen knife started whirling in his hand, giving off light from the body of the blade.

The sudden whistling sound caused by the whirling of the kitchen knife was extremely noticeable. The crowd that was rather noisy a moment ago quieted down as they held their breaths in anticipation of the impending match.

"Owner Bu, I've diligently practiced my cutting techniques for over a dozen years. Today, I'll definitely not go easy in the slightest. I'll use everything I have to compete with you," Master Zhao said. Then, he suddenly banged the table and sent a round potato, that was lying on the table, flying into the air.

Master Zhao's gaze became sharp and the kitchen knife he was holding instantly came slicing out. The kitchen knife continuously whirled in the air, producing the sound of something being sliced up.

With a loud tearing noise, Master Zhao's kitchen knife made a final horizontal cut and firmly stopped in front of him. Thin strips of the evenly cut potato were piled on the back of the kitchen knife.

This performance was very gorgeous. At least, the surrounding spectators were all clapping their hands in astonishment.

Master Zhao placed the potato strips onto a plate. A trace of a confident smile tugged at the corners of his mouth as he provocatively looked at Bu Fang.

Bu Fang remained expressionless. He was not surprised by Master Zhao's performance of cutting a potato in the air in the slightest.

Ouyang Xiaoyi, who was standing next to Bu Fang, disdainfully snorted at Master Zhao's provocative gaze.

"Tell me, how are we going to compete? I want to go back and sleep after we're done here." Bu Fang indifferently said. His voice was calm as water.

However, Bu Fang's indifference sounded like he was lacking in confidence in the ears of others. Suddenly, many of the spectators were looking at Bu Fang with eyes filled with ridicule and amusement. There was even booing coming from the crowd.

Qian Bao was overjoyed to witness such a scene. The more brutal he stepped on Owner Bu, the more the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant's renown would increase.

"In this match, we're competing in three categories: speed, accuracy, and ruthlessness. The so-called speed refers to how fast you can finish cutting the ingredients. Owner Bu should know this clearly. Accuracy refers to the accurateness when cutting the ingredients as well as the precision. Ruthlessness refers to the dissection of meat ingredients. We're competing in these three categories today," Master Zhao solemnly said as he stuck the kitchen knife on the cutting board.

Bu Fang nodded. He was not surprised in the slightest. Those were the standard when competing in cutting techniques.

"Let's begin," Bu Fang said.

"Very well! We'll start with the first category then. We have two hundred radishes over here. How about determining the winner by comparing the time we take to slice a hundred radishes?" Master Zhao said.

"Radishes... again?" Bu Fang thought. The corners of his mouth

widened into a smile as he looked at the radishes stacked on the table. He softly replied, "Alright."

"Owner Bu, take a good look! I am going to start!" When Master Zhao heard Bu Fang's reply, fighting spirit instantly surged from his body, causing the chef uniform he was wearing to flap wildly.

Master Zhao's hand reached out and drew out another kitchen knife. He was going to use two kitchen knives at the same time to cut the radishes.

First, he used his kitchen knives to pick up a radish and move it onto his cutting board. Then, he started chopping down rapidly with his kitchen knives with a clear rhythm. Don, don, don... Within a single breath, a single radish was evenly sliced into pieces. After finishing the first radish, Master Zhao was already preparing the second radish.

As expected of a chef who spent over a dozen years practicing his cutting techniques, Master Zhao's understanding and mastery of cutting techniques had already reached an unattainable level for many chefs. The fact that he was using two kitchen knives at the same time while maintaining such precision when cutting the radish was already extremely difficult for most people. Not to mention, his speed was so fast that onlookers were almost unable to keep up.

A hundred radishes were all precisely sliced into pieces by Master Zhao within ten minutes.

As Master Zhao finished slicing the last radish, he slammed both of his kitchen knives into the cutting board before taking a step back and letting out a deep breath. His forehead was covered with fine beads of sweat.

A series of exclamations and cheers instantly erupted from the spectators, greatly satisfying Master Zhao's self-esteem. He firmly believed that Bu Fang would definitely not be able to surpass him.

"Owner Bu, it's your turn!" Master Zhao overbearingly said.

Bu Fang gave him a glance and indiscernibly shook his head while letting out a soft sigh.

"Since you're seeking death, I'll help you fulfill your wish. The system wanted me to teach you to be a better person. If I don't show you a trick or two... even I wouldn't be able to forgive myself," Bu Fang muttered to himself. Thereafter, he did not use the Golden Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife and took out an ordinary kitchen knife instead.

After performing an unremarkable trick with the kitchen knife, Bu Fang lightly flicked the blade with his finger and then nodded.

"The timer starts now!" Qian Bao said with a chuckle. His face was filled with confidence. On that day, Master Zhao was exhibiting better than usual. His performance was very assuring.

"Alright, let's begin," Bu Fang indifferently said. After that, he extended out his hand while gathering true energy in his palm and suddenly banged the table. He controlled the true energy so that the table was not destroyed, but instead sent the radishes flying into the air.

Buzz...

Within an instant, Bu Fang's eyes became sharp as an eagle's gaze. In that moment, the aura exuding from him underwent a dramatic change.

A hundred radishes were floating in the air, and then the kitchen knife held within Bu Fang's hand started to rotate by itself. The rotational speed was so fast that it struck fear in the hearts of the onlookers. That kitchen knife seemed to have turned into a ray of light as it instantly made a vertical cut.

Plop! Plop!

Everyone present was dumbfounded. Their faces were all filled with incredulity as they stared at the scene before them. Within

their field of vision, everything—except for that one hundred floating radishes and a stream of light that erupted from the darkness—had disappeared. That stream of light was like a rain of meteors streaking across the night sky as it went past those radishes.

Once the darkness subsided and everyone's vision was restored, they discovered the hundred radishes floating in the air had all exploded into pieces. Each piece was sliced into tiny cubes and they were even more exquisite and smaller than Master Zhao's handiwork...

Plop plop plop!

It was as if the sky was raining radish cubes. Bu Fang held up a basket with a single hand and the falling radish cubes all landed inside the basket. Once the final radish cube landed at the top and rolled for a while before quieting down, Bu Fang finished his turn of the first category.

The time he took... was only four breaths. This was including the time it took for the radish cubes to fall into the basket.

Within an instant, the entire alleyway became so quiet that even a pin drop could be heard. Everyone was absentmindedly staring at Bu Fang. The confident smile on Master Zhao's face had already stiffened. He appeared comical and ridiculous like a clown.

While looking at Bu Fang's face filled with indifference, Master Zhao felt as if ten thousand suckling pigs were dashing through his heart... "God damn! Are you calling this a cutting technique? How is this any different from cheating?!"

Chapter 105: The Thousand Layer Tofu Flower

After placing the basket filled to the brim with diced radishes onto the table, Bu Fang indifferently gave Master Zhao a glance. The latter was completely struck with astonishment. His mouth was wide open and incredulity was written all over his face.

Of all the choices they could make, they actually chose to compete in slicing radishes against him... Bu Fang was speechless as well. The training method for the Meteor Cutting Technique was exactly slicing radishes. Furthermore, he had to practice with an extremely heavy kitchen knife that was specially-made. Under this sort of circumstances, it was natural for his cutting technique to be out of the ordinary.

Besides, Bu Fang was even more familiar with slicing radishes since he had to slice a thousand of them every single day. Slicing a hundred radishes within five breaths was like a walk in the park for him. Therefore, if they wanted to blame someone, they could only blame Master Zhao for selecting something that was most advantageous to Bu Fang.

"Let's begin with the second category," Bu Fang indifferently said. That serene voice of his instantly awakened everyone from their astonishment.

"You... How did you do it?! This is impossible! I spent over a dozen years diligently practicing my cutting techniques! How could I be inferior to a rascal like you!" Master Zhao muttered while shaking his head with an absentminded expression.

Bu Fang placed the ordinary kitchen knife he was holding onto the cutting board. He expressionlessly gestured toward Master Zhao to have a look at the kitchen knife he used.

As Master Zhao laid his eyes on that kitchen knife, his pupils

immediately constricted. He saw that the entire blade of the kitchen knife was crumpled up and there were even some cracks on its surface.

"How could anyone achieve this level of cutting technique without undergoing arduous training? You diligently practiced for many years, but I've diligently practiced as well. It's just that our methods are different, that's all," Bu Fang said.

Master Zhao was startled by Bu Fang's words for a moment. Then, he looked toward Bu Fang with a somber expression and nodded, having regained his spirit once more.

"Many thanks for your pointer, Owner Bu. Let's continue, I'll do my best," Master Zhao said. This was still a match where he was betting his dignity as a chef after all. There was no way he could just give up like this.

"The... The second category is measuring the preciseness of your cutting techniques. We've prepared two pieces of tofu, and Owner Bu and Master Zhao will be slicing them. The person who makes the thinnest slices without breaking the tofu is the winner." At that moment, Qian Bao had already lost that self-confidence from before. The Meteor Cutting Technique that Bu Fang displayed had completely defeated his self-confidence.

Bu Fang nodded. Cutting tofu was indeed one of the methods to test a chef's cutting techniques. Since tofu was tender, the chef's control over his strength and preciseness of his techniques were extremely important. Once a mistake was made, the entire tofu would crumble apart.

Master Zhao did not say anything as he directly drew out a slightly narrower kitchen knife and walked toward the tofu placed on a cutting board with a serious expression on his face.

The tofu was delicate and glossy. It looked extremely brittle as if it would crumble from a single touch.

Since the temperature outside was colder, the tofu only was brought out when they were ready. There was still a slight warmth exuding from the tofu.

Slicing tofu was a challenging task, so Master Zhao had to completely immerse himself into the work. All of his attention was focused on his kitchen knife as he started cutting the tofu.

While Master Zhao was beginning to cut the tofu, Bu Fang took out an ordinary kitchen knife once more. This kitchen knife looked exactly the same as the previous one. They both belonged to the type of larger kitchen knives.

His eyes landed on the tofu. After glancing at Master Zhao who was carefully cutting the tofu with all of his concentration, the corners of his mouth slightly widened.

After experiencing the first round of the match, the surrounding spectators were no longer blindly believing in Master Zhao. Many of them were paying close attention to Bu Fang's movements. However, bewilderment and awe soon appeared on every single one of their faces.

When confronted with the delicate tofu, Bu Fang did not choose to be careful like Master Zhao. He treated the tofu as if it was a radish. He twirled around the kitchen knife with his fingers and suddenly chopped down toward the delicate tofu.

The scene from before, when the radishes were cut, appeared once more. During the moment the stream of light was released, it was as if a countless amount of meteors were flashing across the darkness. That delicate tofu immediately began to tremble.

Within four breaths, Bu Fang had already finished cutting. He put away the kitchen knife and looked at the tofu in front of him. That tofu was still intact, as if it was not cut at all.

"This... What's going on? There's nothing happening to the tofu?" someone within the crowd puzzledly whispered. After all,

even though seeing was believing, the tofu before them was completely the same as before.

"Be patient," Bu Fang calmly said, suppressing the discussion within the crowd. Using his hands, he carefully lifted up the piece of spotlessly white and warm tofu and placed it inside a transparent bowl of water. This bowl was prepared by Qian Bao beforehand and allowed the appearance of the tofu to be seen from all directions after it was sliced.

Bu Fang carefully submerged the tofu inside the bowl and then suddenly drew his hand out from the water without causing a single ripple.

In the next moment, an unbelievable change occurred to the tofu inside the transparent bowl.

The change occurred in a quiet manner. After being immersed into the water, strips of tofu that were as fine as hair began hovering. It was like a flower bud was quietly blooming and the fine tofu strips were its petals.

This was the first layer. It was soon followed by a second layer of tofu petal blooming with a different angle. Every single strip hovering in the water was extremely fine.

Beneath the surface, the tofu seemed to be naturally elongating upward as layer after layer of tofu strips started rising due to the effects of buoyant force, forming what looked like a thousand layer flower.

"The thousand layer tofu flower, please enjoy." Bu Fang mildly said to the crowd of spectators.

Everyone sucked in a breath of cold air. They were amazed by the fact that a single cuboid tofu could actually be cut into such a beautiful tofu flower. Those fine petals looked even more fragile than hair as if they would disintegrate with a single touch...

As the sun's rays penetrated through the transparent bowl and lit

up the thousand layer tofu flower floating within the bowl, the strips of tofu hovering in the water looked like a flower fluttering in the wind.

When Qian Bao saw the scene before him, both of his legs went weak. With such a tofu flower, how were they going to win? They were simply not a match for Bu Fang.

"So, it's not that Owner Bu is inept at cutting techniques. It's just that he didn't think it's worth his time to compete with us," Qian Bao bitterly thought. "I was actually dumb enough to shamelessly ask for my own humiliation."

The crowd of spectators was loudly exclaiming as they surrounded the transparent bowl and marvelled at the exquisite tofu flower. They were already completely conquered by its beauty.

On the other side, Master Zhao was still meticulously slicing away at the tofu with his kitchen knife. He did not just give up, and he was not affected by the external influences either. He was fully focused on his work in front of him.

Bu Fang nodded and could not help but feel some admiration toward Master Zhao. He was truly a chef who respected his own dishes.

After over a dozen minutes, Master Zhao completed his own product and placed it within a transparent bowl. Every single strip of tofu that spread out within the water was extremely fine. Even though it could not be compared to the thousand layer tofu flower, his work was already considered to be the pinnacle of cutting techniques.

"Owner Bu, I acknowledge that my skills are beneath yours. This is my loss, and there's no need for us to continue with the third category either. Compared to your cutting techniques, my skills are still lacking. I still need to diligently practice some more," Master Zhao said, while feeling both helpless and bitter.

Bu Fang nodded. The system had already announced the completion of the mission in his mind.

Qian Bao really failed this time. He was feeling really depressed for offering Bu Fang the chance to slap his face. For Bu Fang to be demonically talented at both culinary skills and cutting techniques, it was simply inconceivable. However, with the vastness of the Hidden Dragon Continent, the appearance of such demonic geniuses was normal as well.

"With Owner Bu's excellent culinary skills and razor-sharp cutting techniques, staying within such a tiny store is truly a waste of your talents. I wonder if Owner Bu has any interest in coming over to Immortal Phoenix Restaurant. If the both of us work together, with Owner Bu's culinary skills and the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant's reputation, we'll definitely become well-known through the continent!" The desire to bring Bu Fang over to his side grew within Qian Bao's mind.

"Not interested."

Obviously, Bu Fang rejected his proposition. Even the emperor was heartlessly refused by him, let alone the owner of the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant.

Ouyang Xiaoyi was lying on the table in front of the transparent bowl. Her large eyes were filled with astonishment as she stared at the thousand layer tofu flower that seemed to be crafted via supernatural means. Yang Chen was extremely surprised as well. Was that really something that could be made with a kitchen knife? The culinary world... was truly unfathomable!

Suddenly, both of them felt a hand pressing down on their shoulders and were both startled at the same time. Then, they felt the loss of control over their body as a powerful aura suppressed their true energy.

Ouyang Xiaoyi and Yang Chen looked each other in the eyes and silently shouted the same thing in their minds: Oh no!

Chapter 106: The Elegance Of That Kitchen Knife

A mountain-like pressure suddenly fell upon the bodies of Ouyang Xiaoyi and Yang Chen, causing their entire bodies to stiffen. They were completely unable to manipulate the true energy within their bodies, as if it was frozen solid.

Ouyang Xiaoyi and Yang Chen turned their heads around with much difficulty and saw Song Tao condescendingly looking at them from behind.

An unfathomable light flashed within Song Tao's eyes. True energy continuously appeared in the depth of his eyes as a terrifying aura flowed out from his body. After all, Song Tao was a very powerful sixth grade Battle-Emperor. He was not someone that Ouyang Xiaoyi and Yang Chen could deal with.

"I finally caught the two of you!" Song Tao was sneering as his hands pressed down on their shoulders, controlling the two to walk away from the crowd like they were puppets.

Song Tao was very excited. He was finally able to complete his master's order. This task was truly difficult. If the owner of the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant had not challenged Bu Fang, he really would not be able to find such a good opportunity. The identities of these two brats were far too important for him to mess up.

The importance of Ouyang Xiaoyi, the princess of the Ouyang family, need not be said. She was also the greatest constraint of the Ouyang family. On the other hand, Yang Chen, son of Marquis Yang, was the sole heir to the Yang family. For the Yang family, he was the most treasured person.

As long as they could control these two brats, they had obtained the bargaining chips to negotiate with the Ouyang and Yang

families.

While everyone else was captivated by the beauty of the thousand layer tofu flower, Song Tao was planning to leave while quietly grabbing onto Ouyang Xiaoyi and Yang Chen.

With the true energy in their bodies being controlled by Song Tao, Ouyang Xiaoyi and Yang Chen were not even capable of uttering a single word. Their eyes were filled with anxiety but there was nothing they could do.

"Oi, where are you taking them?" Bu Fang puzzledly asked Song Tao through the crowd.

Song Tao's body immediately stiffened as he silently groaned in his mind. He thought he could get away without anyone noticing, but he still got caught by Bu Fang. With a supreme beast backing up Bu Fang, fleeing was the only thing on Song Tao's mind.

Song Tao gave Bu Fang a glance before he picked up Ouyang Xiaoyi and Yang Chen, and clamped the two under his armpits. True energy gushed out from his feet as he attempted to escape.

Bu Fang immediately understood the situation. This fellow was abducting children in broad daylight. His actions were simply unforgivable.

Bu Fang's eyes became focused as he raised his hand and released the true energy within his body. A wisp of green smoke gathered within his palm and then the pitch-black Golden Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife appeared in his hand. He threw it as hard as he could toward Song Tao, who was in mid-air.

The kitchen knife, having been infused with Bu Fang's true energy and sharing Bu Fang's will, flew toward its target at an extremely fast speed.

At that moment, Song Tao took a glance back. When he saw that Bu Fang actually threw a kitchen knife at him, his eyes were filled with ridicule as the corners of his mouth widened into a smirk. He

was a sixth grade Battle-Emperor. How would a kitchen knife be able to intercept him? Even though he had to admit that Bu Fang's culinary skills were pretty good, a mere fourth grade Battle-Spirit was simply not enough when it came to fighting!

Both of Song Tao's hands were preoccupied, so he kicked his foot toward the simple and pitch-black kitchen knife instead. He was completely looking down on the kitchen knife. It was just a kitchen knife... It was not as if it was a divine weapon or something, right?

When the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife finally made contact with the sole of Song Tao's foot, Song Tao froze. He suddenly discovered that the true energy gathered at the bottom of his foot was broken without providing any sort of protection. After that, blood came spilling out as the kitchen knife viciously stabbed into his foot!

"What the hell!" Song Tao screamed out. A hint of terror appeared on his face, and his eyes were filled with fear when he looked at Bu Fang. He thought, "Damn... That kitchen knife can actually penetrate the true energy barrier of a sixth grade Battle-Emperor? Are you kidding me?"

Song Tao did not dare to stay any longer. The sole of his entire foot was almost sliced off by the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife... As the true energy burst forth from his body, he tried to escape. He did not want to face Bu Fang any longer.

However, the moment Song Tao flew into the air, a tender shout filled with valor came from afar. Even though the shout was a woman's voice, it was surging forward like rolling thunder.

Song Tao was startled for a moment. After that, his pupils constricted and he became vigilant. A graceful figure was rapidly approaching from afar, holding a spear attached with a red tassel. The figure was almost ripping through the air as she came straight at him.

"You audacious fiend! Release the marquis' son!"

The spear, infused with terrifying true energy, actually possessed the powerful presence of a Battle-King. At that moment, Song Tao—who was floating in mid-air—was in a situation where he was actually unable to defend himself against this attack.

Both of his hands were grabbing hold of someone and his foot was injured by that Bu Fang's pitch-black kitchen knife...

Song Tao was tearing up inside... He thought, "What did I ever do to you? Why is completing a mission so difficult!"

Luo Sanniang from the Yang family, a fifth grade Battle-King, was Yang Chen's third sister-in-law. Her cultivation level was superb and she was considered one of the strongest among the females in the imperial city. No... To be exact, the females in the Yang family were all extremely gallant and powerful.

Song Tao did not anticipate that someone from the Yang family would arrive so quickly. In the current situation, he must release someone in order to safely defend himself against Luo Sanniang.

Therefore, he let go of Ouyang Xiaoyi. Compared to Yang Chen, the importance of the Ouyang family's princess was not that great.

Ouyang Xiaoyi's mind went blank when she was suddenly released by Song Tao in mid-air. She was flailing her arms around and screaming as she fell, completely forgetting that she was a fourth grade Battle-Spirit.

On the other hand, Bu Fang was completely composed. He dashed forward and caught the falling Ouyang Xiaoyi with one hand while catching the returning Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife with the other. Even though he was useless in combat, catching a loli was not an issue with his cultivation level backing him up.

Bang bang bang!

In the air, the two exchanged three moves in a row. Luo Sanniang landed on the ground and stumbled several steps backward. Her large chest was moving up and down, and her face

overflowing with bravery was clouded with anger.

Song Tao was still a sixth grade Battle-Emperor after all. Luo Sanniang was not a match for him if she confronted him head-on.

"You scum, who gave you the courage to abduct the marquis' son! You're seeking your own death!" Luo Sanniang shouted. Her slender legs kicked off the ground and she charged forward once more with her spear stabbing toward Song Tao.

True energy gushed out from Luo Sanniang's body like a blazing inferno and covered the entire spear with violent flames.

"You lunatic! We're in the imperial city..."

When Song Tao saw Luo Sanniang's actions, his pupils constricted and he started to panic. If he only used one hand to block this attack, the aftermath of the flames would destroy the surroundings. With so many clueless spectators below them, there would definitely be quite a number of casualties. If that were to happen, there would be huge repercussions.

"The members of the Yang family are indeed all lunatics! They are all unreasonable lunatics!" Song Tao cursed in his mind. He had no choice but to dump Yang Chen. Then, he raised his hands and shot out two lumps of true energy, smothering the flames that enveloped the spear.

A distance away, the city guards could be seen rushing over. Song Tao roared in frustration as he turned around and swiftly departed while limping.

Even after spending so much time plotting and getting treated as a beggar by others, he still failed in the end... Song Tao was livid. If the sole of his foot was not injured by Bu Fang's attack, he would have already gotten away.

Luo Sanniang watched as Song Tao's figure limped away. She scornfully spat out a mouthful of blood and coldly snorted.

After that, she trotted toward Yang Chen who had safely landed.

"Third sister-in-law!" Yang Chen timidly yelled when he saw Luo Sanniang approaching.

She stopped in front of Yang Chen and immediately started twisting his ear. "You little rascal! How dare you play truant! You've really done it this time!"

"Third sister-in-law... I won't do it anymore," Yang Chen, feeling humiliated, hurriedly begged for mercy.

As Luo Sanniang angrily breathed out, she started coughing and her large chest was jiggling violently.

"Hurry up and thank Owner Bu. If it wasn't for him, the two of you would've gotten abducted once more," Luo Sanniang exasperatedly said.

At that moment, Bu Fang was walking toward them along with the frightened Ouyang Xiaoyi. He gave Luo Sanniang a glance and his eyes swept over her bountiful chest. While keeping on a straight face, he asked, "Why is that person trying to abduct Xiaoyi and the shota?"

Luo Sanniang had just caught her breath and her pupils constricted when she heard Bu Fang's words. Her chest jiggled as she yelled out, "Oh no! The marquis and General Ouyang have already left to look for the crown prince!"

Chapter 107: Researching A New Dish

"This morning, the marquis and General Ouyang received a secret letter from the crown prince. The crown prince claimed that he had information about your whereabouts, so they went to the crown prince's palace," Luo Sanniang said with a rather unpleasant expression.

Yang Chen and Ouyang Xiaoyi only understood Luo Sanniang's words but did not understand the meaning behind them.

On the contrary, Bu Fang knew some parts of the story but he was completely uninterested in this matter. In fact, whoever became the emperor was the same to him since he only wanted to run a restaurant within the imperial city. As long as the new emperor did not bother him, everything was fine.

"Alright, since that fellow has already been driven away by you, you should take these two brats home," Bu Fang said to Luo Sanniang.

Luo Sanniang was startled for a moment, then she looked at Bu Fang and nodded. "I've long since heard of Owner Bu's name. Now that I've personally seen you, the owner of the store that's the talk of the town is indeed not an ordinary person."

To be able to nearly slice off the sole of a sixth grade Battle-Emperor with a single attack using a kitchen knife, this Bu Fang's combat prowess was rather incredible. Battle-Emperors were already considered the top-notch experts within the entire Light Wind Empire. However, the protective barrier of a Battle-Emperor was penetrated by a kitchen knife of a mere fourth grade Battle-Spirit. This was simply unimaginable for Luo Sanniang.

"I am good friends with Yanyu, so I've heard stories about Owner Bu. I've always wanted to find an opportunity to visit Owner Bu's store to try out the delicious food that was highly praised by Yanyu. When I get the chance next time, I'll definitely visit," Luo

Sanniang earnestly said.

"Alright, you're very welcomed." Bu Fang nodded. So, this busty chick before him knew Xiao Yanyu. No wonder she was greeting him as if they were old friends.

Luo Sanniang grabbed hold of the hands of Ouyang Xiaoyi and Yang Chen. After bidding farewell to Bu Fang, she hurriedly left with the two brats. The crown prince was obviously planning to use their whereabouts to coerce the Ouyang and Yang families into supporting him when he sent the secret letter to them. This would be a tremendous help in aiding his enthronement.

However, the truth was Ouyang Xiaoyi and Yang Chen were not in the crown prince's clutches. Or to be exact, these two brats unexpectedly escaped.

In that case, the situation became rather uncertain.

...

The employees from Immortal Phoenix Restaurant had already removed the tables and ingredients used for the match and the thousand layer tofu flower made by Bu Fang was carefully taken away by Qian Bao. This piece of work could be considered a masterpiece among cutting technique and there was even some sculpting techniques used.

The alleyway became spacious once more. However, news of Bu Fang's godlike, uncanny cutting techniques had completely spread. A chef from the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant had suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the black-hearted store's owner. This was not an inconsequential advertisement. At the very least, many of the spectators followed after Bu Fang in the hopes of glimpsing his culinary skills.

Bu Fang walked back into the store but he started covering up the entrance with the door boards, completely ignoring the crowd gathered outside.

"Owner Bu, why are you closing up so early?" a potential customer puzzledly asked. They witnessed Bu Fang's cutting techniques and wanted to savor the delicious food within the store, since they were already there. They did not anticipate that Bu Fang would actually close up the store.

"Today's opening hours has already ended. If you want to taste my dishes, come back earlier tomorrow to queue up," Bu Fang expressionlessly said while completely ignoring the crowd outside of the store whose expressions were gradually becoming displeased.

"You're really unreasonable. It's not as if we won't pay for the food. Why are you not letting us in?"

"Are you not running a store to make money? This is a chance for you to make money and you're not interested, are you stupid?"

...

The crowd's dissatisfied complaints continued to resound within the alleyway. Obviously, Bu Fang's decision to close the store had angered them.

Bu Fang was leaning on the doorway, expressionlessly watching the crowd. He was not in a rush to give them a response and just indifferently looked at them, while listening to their complaints and abuse.

Only until everyone had gotten tired, Bu Fang stood up and picked up the last piece of door board. He said, "I already said that the opening hours has ended. If you want to eat here, come back earlier tomorrow to queue up. This store does not provide services during non-opening hours."

After Bu Fang finished speaking, he closed up the last piece of door board with a bang.

Everyone was stunned. There actually existed such a weird and stubborn owner in this world? Who was not even interested in

making money?!

"Ptui! What kind of a garbage store is this! Who the hell do you think you are! I am not interested in eating here anymore!" One of the customers dissatisfiedly spat on the ground and turned around with the intention to leave.

However, before he could even take a single step, he felt a gigantic pressure fall upon him. He tumbled onto the ground and coincidentally lied down on the place where his spit landed, lightly brushing against that spot. He only felt the pressure disappear after the floor was wiped clean.

That person's face was filled with terror as he got up from the ground in a pathetic manner and scrambled to escape from the alleyway. There was something strange within the alleyway!

The others did not feel that pressure, so they were puzzled when they saw that person frantically running away.

Since the entrance of the store was closed, they did not persist any further and left the alleyway one after another. The entire alleyway regained its tranquility once more.

Blacky lazily rolled its eyes while lying in front of the store's entrance. It moved its head and adjusted its position before continuing with its cozy slumber. How dare he spit in front of the store's entrance... There was no way Blacky would let him leave before he wiped the floor clean.

Bu Fang took off his overcoat once he got back into the store. He stretched his body and walked toward the kitchen.

The system's reward had already been given out, but Bu Fang was unexpectedly unconcerned about it. Regarding the system's somewhat revengeful mission this time, Bu Fang felt rather amused. He did not think the system would be capable of throwing a tantrum as well.

Back in the kitchen, a wisp of green smoke encircled Bu Fang's

hand and the extremely sharp Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife appeared in his hand.

The Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife that almost sliced off the sole of a sixth grade Battle-Emperor was still unassuming. There was neither dust nor blood stains on it.

However, Bu Fang still habitually used the spring water provided by the system to wash the knife's blade. After all, as a chef, Bu Fang was quite obsessed with cleanliness.

After cleaning the Golden Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife, Bu Fang waved his hand and the kitchen knife turned into a wisp of green smoke, returning into the mark on his wrist. Then, he went into a daze for a while, staring at the cutting board in front of him.

Bu Fang suddenly did not feel like cooking the dishes on the store's menu. He was feeling exhausted after cooking the same thing every single day. All humans have a sense of laziness and Bu Fang was a human as well.

He thought about going back to sleep in his room, but felt that it was a little too early for sleeping.

Therefore, Bu Fang was feeling somewhat undecided on what to do for a moment.

Suddenly, he narrowed his eyes and took out a piece of the Wandering Dragon Cow's meat from the system's storage space. This was the meat from the Wandering Dragon Cow's legs and was filled with a rich amount of spirit energy.

Bu Fang rubbed his chin as he looked at the piece of beef shank. Suddenly, he wanted to cook his own dish instead of following the dishes on the menu.

Creating and researching new dishes was a thing that every single chef was interested in, and Bu Fang was not an exception.

The Wandering Dragon Cow was a seventh grade spirit beast. Its meat was extremely hard and it was impossible for an ordinary

kitchen knife to cut into it. Therefore, Bu Fang summoned the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife once more and swiftly turned the piece of meat from the Wandering Dragon Cow into minced meat.

Looking at the minced meat, Bu Fang suddenly remembered an extremely delicious dish. However, in order to cook that dish, he still needed to prepare and process many other things and the steps were rather troublesome.

However, as he recalled the taste of that dish, Bu Fang's exhausted mind suddenly became energetic.

He took out the intestines of the Wandering Dragon Cow from the system's storage space and repeatedly washed the blood-stained intestines at the sink. He used the spirit spring water provided by the system which ensured the spirit energy contained in the intestines was preserved.

After cleaning the intestines, Bu Fang carefully started peeling off its outer layer, the submucosa.

This submucosa was an important material in the dish Bu Fang was going to make next.

Chapter 108: An Extravagant Sausage

On the imperial city's Long Street, heavy snow was unsteadily falling from the skies above, covering the green quartzite tiles and pressing down upon the tents set up by vendors next to the street.

A chilly wind blew past, causing the pedestrians wearing layer upon layer of clothes to uncontrollably shiver and exhale a cloud of white breath before continuing on their way.

Luo Sanniang was dragging along Ouyang Xiaoyi and Yang Chen. The three of them were slowly walking on the imperial city's Long Street. The snowy breeze and falling snowflakes were all blocked by the true energy barrier that Luo Sanniang had erected.

As the three of them walked on, Luo Sanniang was still berating Yang Chen about something, while Yang Chen appeared miserable with his little face almost scrunched together. Next to them, Ouyang Xiaoyi was giggling at Yang Chen's wretched appearance.

Suddenly, the snow that covered the skies stopped falling and the entire street became quiet. Luo Sanniang's pupils constricted. She could not hear anything in her ears, except the sound of her own breathing.

She turned her head with much difficulty and looked at Ouyang Xiaoyi and Yang Chen. Their tiny mouths were opening and closing, as if they were saying something. However, Luo Sanniang could not hear anything at all.

At the end of the street, a man wearing an overcoat made from crane feathers leisurely walked forward with his hands held behind his back.

With every step he took, Luo Sanniang felt the pressure on her body increase. The scenery in the surroundings became dull and only the man leisurely walking toward her was left in her pupils.

"Zh... Zhao Musheng?!"

Luo Sanniang's red lips slightly opened and she cried out this name in astonishment, only to discover that she was unable to make any sound. Her delicate body was slightly trembling. The pressure was suppressing her to the point where she was unable to move even a muscle.

Zhao Musheng leisurely walked with his hands held behind his back until he came before Luo Sanniang. His pupils were ever-changing like the vast ocean, as if a Buddhist aura was circulating inside and a sutra was being chanted.

Luo Sanniang blankly stared at Zhao Musheng. The corners of the latter's mouth curled up as he passed by her. He grabbed hold of the hands of Yang Chen and Ouyang Xiaoyi, and step by step disappeared from the imperial city's Long Street...

Bang!

Luo Sanniang's eyes widened as she powerlessly knelt down on the ground. Her perky chest was moving up and down as she gasped for air.

The clamor of the city and the howling of the winter wind returned to her ears once more. A snowflake quietly fell and landed on Luo Sanniang's loose black hair. Her true energy barrier had already collapsed without her awareness.

The entire imperial city was in a state of shock. The prominent families, Ouyang and Yang, had declared their intention to aid the crown prince's enthronement. This news was like a devastating earthquake had occurred in the already turbulent imperial city.

The rich and influential families that were originally still indecisive all began to pick a side. Most of them had chosen to support the crown prince, Ji Chengan.

The number of rich and influential that was supporting King Yu had substantially decreased as well. With the support of the Ouyang and Yang families, the crown prince's enthronement was

practically in the bag. Once the crown prince became the emperor, there was basically no chance for King Yu to make a comeback.

There was still one more prominent family within the imperial city, the Xiao family. General Xiao Meng had already announced earlier on that he would only support the emperor. This meant that unless special circumstances arose, he would not support either the crown prince or King Yu.

King Yu's manor.

The expression of King Yu, Ji Chengyu, sank as he banged the table with his palm, shattering the entire table into pieces. The aura exuding from his body became extremely bleak.

"That damnable Zhao Musheng! That detestable old fox! He didn't make any movements, so I thought he was going to be a spectator! I didn't anticipate that he would do this! Damn it! God damn it!"

Inside of the room, Hun Qianyun wrapped in a black robe faintly smiled as he watched the enraged King Yu. He said, "There's no need for King Yu to be angry. Humans are bound to make mistakes. The fact that Zhao Musheng was able to become the Minister of the Left proves his craftiness. Nevertheless, even if the crown prince has gained the support of the Ouyang and Yang families, we're not necessarily helpless against them."

King Yu took a deep breath and suppressed his anger. He looked at Hun Qianyun and gestured for him to continue.

"We've already gained the support of many court officials, including the Finance Minister himself. With his help, we'll be able to control the entire economy of the imperial city. Furthermore, the White Bone Palace and the Joyous Union Sect from the four great sects of the Heterodox Path have already dispatched their experts to support King Yu. In terms of high-end combat capability, as long as Xiao Meng doesn't intervene, we have the upper hand over the crown prince," Hun Qianyun said.

"The White Bone Palace and the Joyous Union Sect?" King Yu instantly narrowed his eyes sharply at Hun Qianyun.

On the contrary, Hun Qianyun was perfectly composed as he calmly looked back at King Yu.

"When did I ever say I wanted assistance from the White Bone Palace and the Joyous Union Sect? The four Heterodox Path sects really are close..." King Yu said with a sneer.

Hun Qianyun lightly chuckled and shook his head. "We're not the four Heterodox Path sects anymore. The Death Soul Palace was wiped out by Emperor Changfeng, so they're no longer considered part of the four great Heterodox sects. However, with the aid of the three great Heterodox sects' support, is King Yu still not confident of sitting on that throne?"

"You truly are self-assured," King Yu said while narrowing his eyes.

"I think we're the same." The spirit fire within Hun Qianyun's eye sockets pulsed.

...

Bu Fang carefully peeled off the outer layer of the Wandering Dragon Cow's small intestine. The transparent and springy outer layer of the small intestine was very suitable for being used as a sausage casing.

Indeed, Bu Fang was planning to make sausages, a type of food that he loved back when he was on Earth. The rich aroma of an authentic, well-made sausage was guaranteed to make anyone salivate.

However, the sausage that Bu Fang was making this time was not an ordinary one. Based on the ingredients alone, it was already far superior to ordinary sausages. Only Bu Fang would be wasteful enough to use the meat of the Wandering Dragon Cow to make sausages.

Once the sausage casing was prepared, Bu Fang placed it aside and took out some of the spirit herbs he harvested during his visit to the Valley of the Fallen Phoenix from the system's storage space. These spirit herbs were not as valuable as the Phoenix Blood Herb. However, the herbs were still rather precious and brimming with spirit energy.

The Golden Dragon Bone Kitchen whirled in Bu Fang's hand and fell like a meteor, turning all of these spirit herbs into fine powder. With the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife's special characteristics, the medicinal property of these spirit herbs was all preserved. After mixing the powder with the minced meat, he took a small break and later added seasoning before retrieving the sausage casing.

He took out some specially-made rock sugar provided by the system. Every single piece of the rock sugar was as beautiful as a gem. However, this beauty was soon turned into dust by Bu Fang's kitchen knife. After mixing these rock sugar dust into the minced meat, Bu Fang began shoving the minced meat into the sausage casing.

With the help of true energy, stuffing the minced meat was much easier. Bu Fang only needed to infuse true energy into the sausage casing and it would become inflated. After that, it was an easy matter to shove the minced meat into the sausage casing. Once the entire sausage casing was full, he used catguts to segment it into individual sausages.

Looking at the bulging sausage, an intense amount of spirit energy was seeping out from the sausage casing. There was already a fragrance wafting from the sausages even before they were cooked.

This fragrance was not the aroma of meat, but the smell of the spirit herbs mixed within the minced meat.

Bu Fang was rather satisfied as he looked at the twenty odd sausages. There was only this much sausages. Once they were sold

out, there would not be any more.

After all, there was only one seventh grade Wandering Dragon Cow and it only had a single small intestine...

When Bu Fang imagined the fragrance these sausages would exude after he deep-fried them, his mouth started to salivate. He was itching to cook them right now.

However, there was no point in being anxious. After preparing the sausages, he still needed to let them dry cure for a few days. Therefore, Bu Fang hung the sausages within a cupboard provided by the system. This cupboard had the effect of accelerating the dry curing process. The principle was the same as accelerating the fermentation process back when he used the Nine Brewing Method.

After closing the cupboard, Bu Fang let out a deep breath. He was looking forward to the result. After all, this was his first time not making something from the system's menu.

"System, what's the approximate price for my sausages after they're cooked?" Bu Fang asked in curiosity.

Chapter 109: The High-End, Refined, And Classy Big Dipper Carving Technique

"The host's personal dish has been detected. The price evaluation of the dish will now begin..." The system's solemn voice resounded within Bu Fang's mind, and then became silent.

Bu Fang waited for a few seconds but he was puzzled when there was no reply from the system.

However, the system's solemn voice soon rang out once more.

"The Wandering Dragon Cow Meat Sausage is made from the shanks of the Wandering Dragon Cow. It is rich in spirit energy and has multiple natural spirit herbs added, which not only increased the flavor of the sausage but also increased its medicinal value. The submucosa of the Wandering Dragon Cow was used as the sausage casing, which encases the spirit energy to prevent dissipation. The system's price evaluation of this dish is: two hundred fifty crystals per sausage, it should not be consumed by those with a cultivation level below fifth grade Battle-King."

Two hundred fifty crystals per sausage... When Bu Fang heard the price, he went into a daze and then became utterly speechless.

A single sausage was actually going to be sold for two hundred fifty crystals. So far, this was the most expensive dish within the store. Furthermore, he was the one who created the dish. For some reason, Bu Fang suddenly felt a little excited.

However, after thinking for a while, Bu Fang felt the price was reasonable because the sausage was different from the Improved Rice Noodle Roll. Bu Fang only added a little bit of the Wandering Dragon Cow's meat into the Rice Noodle Roll, while the sausage was stuffed with the shanks of the Wandering Dragon Cow. The difference in quantity between the two could not be compared.

Besides, not only the Wandering Dragon Cow's meat, the spirit

herbs added into the sausages were also considerably expensive. Therefore, the price being set as two hundred fifty crystals was truly not that high, to the point it could even be called affordable. After all, there was basically no possibility of an ordinary person getting the chance to eat the meat of a seventh grade spirit beast.

There were twenty one sausages in total. If he sold all of them, he would get five thousand two hundred fifty crystals. In order to become a fifth grade Battle-King, he needed ten thousand crystals after conversion. According to his current energy conversion ratio, he needed to achieve a sales figure of twenty thousand crystals.

After selling all of these sausages, Bu Fang would be able to save a quarter of the time needed to reach the next cultivation level. This was an unexpected surprise for him.

The most important thing was... the twenty one sausages only used up less than a single leg of the Wandering Dragon Cow. The entire Wandering Dragon Cow had so much meat. If he cooked and sold all of it, Bu Fang would probably earn enough to become a sixth grade Battle-King...

He actually wanted to immediately cook one of expensive sausages and taste the flavor. Unfortunately, dry curing the sausages required time.

Therefore, Bu Fang could only head toward his room while stretching his body. After he finished washing up, he climbed onto his bed and went to sleep.

As someone aiming to become the God of Cooking, having enough sleep was important.

...

The Yang manor.

Both of Luo Sanniang's legs were slightly trembling as she returned to the manor. The moment she stepped into the manor, a graceful figure hurried over from afar to support her.

"Elder sister Luo, are you alright?" A feminine voice sounded out from the mouth of the graceful figure.

"Juan'Er, hurry and bring me to see the marquis!" Luo Sanniang urgently said while grabbing hold of the gentle and beautiful woman in a turquoise dress.

Luo Sanniang's reaction clearly gave the woman called Juan'Er a scare. She timidly asked, "Did elder sister find Xiaochen?"

"I found him and managed to rescue him. I was bringing him back... when someone else abducted him." Luo Sanniang's eyes suddenly became dull.

Juan'Er's tiny mouth slightly opened as she exclaimed in disbelief, "Who would dare to abduct someone under elder sister's protection within the imperial city?"

Luo Sanniang could only bitterly smile in response. The truth was not something she could explain easily. Until now, she still could not believe that the man whose entire body was enveloped within a buddhist aura was actually Zhao Musheng, the Minister of the Left who has always been known for his refinement and was even nicknamed as the feeble scholar!

It turned out that everyone was deceived by Zhao Musheng. This wily old fox was not only not a harmless scholar, but he was also a terrifying expert whose cultivation was so strong that Luo Sanniang was not even capable of resisting.

Until that day, Luo Sanniang had only felt that sort of terrifying presence, that made her feel as if the entire world was spinning, from a single person.

That person was the Light Wind Empire's number one expert, seventh grade Battle-Saint Xiao Meng.

Zhao Musheng was a seventh grade Battle-Saint? Luo Sanniang herself was confused... Even she was unable to believe this sort of incredible claim.

During the reign of the Emperor Changfeng, Zhao Musheng passed the imperial examination and step by step turned from a young scholar into the top-scorer of the imperial examination. His career was meteoric, spending only over a decade to become the Minister of the Left. Everyone assumed Zhao Musheng was simply just a scholar.

Which is why many people were unconcerned about him. Even if he was peerless in devising stratagems, the empire valued one's martial ability after all. They all thought a scholar was not capable of anything big.

As the night descended, the imperial city was still in a tumultuous state.

The situation of the entire imperial city was unstable and dangers were present everywhere.

At the Yang manor, the Marquis Who Pacifies the West, Yang Mo, returned with a grim expression. Luo Sanniang relayed everything she had seen and heard to the white-headed and imposing elderly man.

"I understand," Yang Mo said and gestured for Luo Sanniang and Jian'Er to withdraw.

He sat above the main hall without saying anything. The fact that Zhao Musheng abducted Ouyang Xiaoyi and Yang Chen in order to force the two families into supporting the crown prince was clearly a declaration of war against King Yu...

"If Zhao Musheng truly is a seventh grade Battle-Saint, why was he hiding his cultivation level for so many years? Zhao Musheng... Who exactly are you? And what are you planning?" Yang Mo softly muttered.

He was not worried about Yang Chen's safety. Furthermore, in a few more days, Zhao Musheng would dispatch his subordinates to send Yang Chen back. However, knowing the truth would not

change anything.

Because the Yang and Ouyang family siding with the crown prince had already become a fact. There were many court officials following them, so it was impossible for them to go back on their word. Which is to say, they could only continue to support the crown prince.

"However... Is the crown prince really suitable as an emperor?" Yang Mo let out a long sigh. Even though the crown prince was neither foolish nor cruel, he was too mediocre. There was still quite a difference in the abilities of the crown prince and King Yu.

Yang Mo was really unable to understand Zhao Musheng's intention for supporting the crown prince.

At the Ouyang manor, a similar sigh could also be heard.

...

Within this unstable imperial city, while some people were unable to have a good night's sleep, Bu Fang was sleeping soundly.

The so-called imperial family's affairs had nothing to do with him. His only objective was just to run the store. Once the night quietly passed and the sun rose over the horizon, Bu Fang got up from bed on time.

Putting on a woolen clothing, Bu Fang left his room and entered the kitchen. Everyday, during this hour, he would practice his cutting techniques. Even though Bu Fang had the system, he still had to diligently practice. There were no shortcuts to success.

However, Bu Fang had no intentions of practicing his cutting techniques that day. His Meteor Cutting Technique had already reached the culmination of the first level. Even though the second level was already unlocked, Bu Fang was not in a hurry. First, he wanted to practice the Big Dipper Carving Technique that was already unlocked.

When it came to carving techniques, Bu Fang actually had some

experience with them. While making the Thousand Layer Tofu Flower from the day before, he mixed in some carving techniques during the cutting process. Even though he did not include a lot of carving, it still caused the thousand layer tofu flower to stun everyone present.

Now that he was going to begin the system's carving technique training, even though the difficulty might be higher than the thousand layer tofu flower, there would not be a need for him to mix in that many complicated cutting techniques.

"Big Dipper Carving Technique: a special carving technique that requires true energy. The host needs to utilize true energy all the time while carving. Extreme care and precision needs to be taken during the carving in order to adhere true energy from the kitchen knife onto the surface of the dish. This would increase its vividness and achieve a dreamlike effect. The Big Dipper Carving Technique provides an exclusive magic array as well. Once the carving is completed, plating will increase the beauty of the dish."

Bu Fang checked the system's introduction of the Big Dipper Carving Technique. After taking a look, he realized this technique was not an ordinary carving technique and he even needed to utilize true energy. In an instant, this technique became high-end, refined, and classy.

Chapter 110: How Dare You Snatch My Phoenix Blood Herb

True energy was needed while practicing the Big Dipper Carving Technique. This made the difficulty of the training even harder for the practitioners because true energy was very unstable. If any mistakes were made during the sculpting process, the ingredient would be damaged. Therefore, the chef's ability to control true energy was strongly tested.

Similar to the cutting technique training, the system prepared a specially-made kitchen knife for Bu Fang as well but this one was much lighter. The kitchen knife used during the cutting technique training was made from a special metal and lifting it up alone was extremely strenuous.

When Bu Fang looked at the thick and broad kitchen knife, he began to feel unwell. He thought, "Shouldn't those kind of small-sized carving knives be used when practicing carving techniques? What's the meaning of giving me a butcher's knife?"

The kitchen knife itself was not that heavy, but the visual impact made Bu Fang feel depressed.

Pursing his lips, Bu Fang walked toward a cupboard and took out a piece of tofu that was prepared by the system. This was the ingredient that was going to be used for the practice. Obviously, Bu Fang was not supposed to use this tofu for testing his cutting technique, but to practice his carving technique.

The tofu was extremely white and it was still exuding warmth. A faint fragrance was wafting from the tofu. Without a question, the quality of the tofu was very high. At the very least, it was much better than the one prepared by the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant.

Grabbing the thick and broad kitchen knife, Bu Fang felt rather awkward for a moment as he faced the palm-sized, delicate tofu.

He did not know how he should proceed.

With the first swing of his knife—the moment he circulated his true energy—the tender tofu immediately broke into pieces and bits of tofu flew everywhere.

Clearly, his first attempt had failed.

However, Bu Fang was not discouraged. Since he was holding a kitchen knife that was similar to those used by butchers, Bu Fang had not intended to succeed with his first attempt. Therefore, his expression remained the same as he retrieved a piece of tofu from the cupboard and continued with the carving technique training.

When it was almost time for the store to open, there was already a thick layer of tofu gathered on the table. Bu Fang had already lost count of the number of times he failed.

Nevertheless, growing from failure, reviewing one's mistakes, and finding the key to success were the most important parts of learning.

True energy flowed like a stream into the specially-made kitchen knife. Bu Fang wield the kitchen knife as if it weighed nothing and skillfully carved on the surface of the tofu...

His movements were awkward but they were much better than before when the tofu crumbled upon contact.

Gently pulling back the kitchen knife, Bu Fang let out a deep breath. He twirled the kitchen knife in his hand and performed a knife trick before gently placing it down. He finally finished the first work.

In front of Bu Fang, there was a palm-sized tofu with some parts starting to slowly fall off, as if its clothes were being taken off to reveal the world inside.

It was a lotus flower carved from tofu with white and delicate petals. The petals were translucent like paper and seemed like they would be destroyed from a single gust of wind. The layers of petals

stacked together were extremely beautiful. Furthermore, the use of true energy seemed to have caused the surface of the tofu lotus flower to glisten, making it exceptionally attractive.

"I still need to put in more effort. Nonetheless, I finally managed to carve out the first piece of work after using up the entire morning practice," Bu Fang muttered to himself. After that, he cleaned up the kitchen and started preparing Blacky's breakfast, the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs.

A busy day was beginning once more.

For three consecutive days, the imperial city was in an uproar. The situation within the imperial court was constantly changing.

The news of Emperor Changfeng's demise was already made known and the time of the funeral procession was confirmed. It was set to be held three days before the Spring Festival. The funeral of a great emperor was definitely going to be a grand and spectacular affair.

Even though the crown prince and King Yu were still fighting over the throne, neither of them dared to disregard Emperor Changfeng's funeral. This was not just a problem of respecting Emperor Changfeng, but also a test of their filial piety.

Ji Chengxue, who was on a campaign outside of the empire's border, was already en route back to the imperial city. The news of the emperor's demise had finally spread to him, so he chose to return. Even though he knew the current state of the imperial city was stormy, he still wanted to come back. His purpose was not just to attend the funeral.

On a mountain path, a troop of bunched-up soldiers was slowly proceeding along the rugged terrain. Ji Chengxue, wearing a military attire, was slowly walking in the middle of this troop with a grave expression on his handsome face.

Next to Ji Chengxue, there was a figure with a bamboo hat slowly

moving along with them while riding atop a horse.

The both of them were silent and the mood between them was extremely awkward and tense.

When the majestic silhouette of the imperial city appeared before them, Ji Chengxue took a deep breath. His eyes glistened with a meaningful light.

"Are you really planning to enter the imperial city?" A hoarse voice reached Ji Chengxue's ears coming from the mouth of the man wearing a bamboo hat.

"There's still ten more days before the Spring Festival and father's funeral is held three days before that. If I don't head back right now, I won't be able to make it for his funeral," Ji Chengxue mildly replied.

"Nevertheless, you should think carefully... Once you step into the imperial city, there's a chance that you might be targeted by the crown prince and King Yu... When that happens, you'll be in grave danger."

"I've never been safe. Even though they seem to be unconcerned about me... I am still a prince after all." Ji Chengxue chuckled as he turned his head toward the man hidden under the bamboo hat and said, "It might be dangerous for me to enter the imperial city, but your situation is not any better than mine. Right, Xiao Yue?"

The figure under the bamboo hat chuckled helplessly for a moment. However, after a long while, the both of them started laughing together.

"Now that you've mentioned it, I really miss Owner Bu's Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine. It's been so long since I've smelled its aroma that I am really craving for some right now. I really want to drink a dozen jars immediately." Xiao Yue hoarsely said.

Ji Chengxue's lips curled up as he gave Xiao Yue a glance. "A dozen jars? You wish. Owner Bu only sells three jars per day.

You're lucky if you even get to drink a single jar."

Xiao Yue stared blankly for a moment and then let out a deep sigh.

...

Before Ji Chengxue's army reached the imperial city, three figures were standing before its imposing gates.

The person leading them was a woman wearing a veil, whose attire was very casual. Her overflowing long hair was tied up with a simple string, and she did not have too many accessories on her. She was also wearing a loose robe that completely concealed her figure.

On the other hand, the other two figures were respectfully standing behind the woman. If Bu Fang was here, he would definitely recognise them because they were the people he met in the Wildlands, Tang Yin and Lu Xiaoxiao.

At that moment, Tang Yin was both respectfully and fearfully looking at the woman in long robes with a complicated expression on his face.

"Master... Are we really going to look for senior? Senior is really terrifying and unfathomable!" Tang Yin helplessly said.

The eyes of the woman wearing a veil turned and landed on Tang Yin. Suddenly, an enormous pressure caused Tang Yin to break out in cold sweats.

The woman's eyes were extremely beautiful. Her eyebrows were long and curvy, and the corner of her eyes were slightly curving upward. Her skin was fair and supple. Just from looking at her eyes, she appeared to be a devastatingly beautiful woman.

"Xiaoyinyin, I don't know how powerful that senior of yours is. However... if you continue to nag at me, I'll make you drink an entire jar of my special chilli sauce!" the woman said. Her voice was pleasing to the ears but the words that came out of her mouth

made Tang Yin want to cry.

This woman was Tang Yin's master as well as the third elder of the Celestial Arcanum, Ni Yan! She was an extremely temperamental woman!

After glaring at Tang Yin, Ni Yan turned her gaze toward Lu Xiaoxiao and asked, "Girl, that Phoenix Blood Herb was really taken by that fellow, right? You're not lying to me, right?"

Lu Xiaoxiao hurriedly nodded her head.

Ni Yan's narrowed her beautiful eyes and snorted before heading into the imperial city.

"How dare you snatch my Phoenix Blood Herb, and I even heard that you're a chef... I like to talk with my culinary skills the most! Ahem!"

Tang Yin and Lu Xiaoxiao helplessly looked each other in the eyes before they hurriedly followed after her.

Chapter 111: A Woman Who Is More Capable At Causing Trouble Than Owner Bu

"As expected of the Light Wind Empire's imperial city, it's really festive. It's much livelier than our lousy, far-flung sect," Ni Yan muttered as she curiously scanned her surroundings. Her feminine body was concealed under her loose robe as she slowly walked on the imperial city's Long Street.

It was an early winter morning. The sides of the streets were packed with hawking peddlers as well as small-time merchants selling various goods. It was unexpectedly lively. It seemed that even the swirling snow was unable to reduce the enthusiasm of the vendors.

Tang Yin and Lu Xiaoxiao carefully followed after Ni Yan for fear of losing her in the crowd. Everything was good about their [cheap master](#). Her talent for cultivation was so strong that she reached seventh grade Battle-Saint. Her culinary skills were excellent as well. The dishes she cooked were overwhelmingly fragrant. Even her looks were peerless. However, she had one laughable weakness and that was having a poor sense of direction.

"Xiaoyinyin, you should just run a stall at our sect's plaza in the future. You might make even more money. You'll be able to provide some liveliness to our sect as well. Usually, I don't see anyone around whenever I leave my room. How embarrassing," Ni Yang said to Tang Yin, who was following behind her.

Tang Yin immediately forced a laugh. Why would a sixth grade Battle-Emperor like him set up a stall at their sect's plaza... He was not stupid.

"By the way, what's the name of the restaurant belonging to that senior of yours?" Ni Yan tilted her head, revealing part of her beautiful face hidden under the veil.

Tang Yin was about to reply but before he could say anything, he was interrupted by Ni Yan. "Oh, since he's such an arrogant fellow and his cultivation level is high as well, he should be running the most famous restaurant in the imperial city..."

Tang Yin wordlessly watched as Ni Yan went up to a middle-aged woman who was selling vegetables and directly asked which was the most famous restaurant in the imperial city.

"The most popular restaurant in the imperial city? Without a doubt, it's the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant," the middle-aged woman replied with a strong accent.

Immortal Phoenix Restaurant? Ni Yan nodded. After thanking the middle-aged woman, she continued walking forward. Tang Yin and Lu Xiaoxiao helplessly looked each other in the eyes. In the end, Tang Yin still opened his mouth and said, "Master, the restaurant's name that the senior mentioned seems to be... Fang Fang's Little Store."

"What Fang Fang's Little Store? He might as well call it [Yuan Yuan's Little Stall](#). What a depressing name. Nevermind, we'll go to that Fang Fang's Little Store later. Let's take a look at the most famous restaurant in the imperial city first. I want to try out their dishes," Ni Yan seriously said.

Even though Ni Yan was the third elder of the Celestial Arcanum Sect, she was different from the other elders who concentrated on studying astrology and divination. She set all of her mind on culinary instead. She liked cooking using the meat of spirit beasts and researching new dishes. However, the most important thing was that she was a glutton.

She had an almost obsessional craze about food.

Tang Yin was at a loss as he watched his master swagger ahead of him. Their master would lose all of her self-control whenever food was mentioned. It looked like this Immortal Phoenix Restaurant was going to suffer.

Even though their master was fond of eating, she was even more picky because of her fondness...

The three of them soon reached the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant. The beautifully furnished restaurant was still packed with people. There were frequent customers coming and going and its business was flourishing as usual.

Even though one of the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant's chef had lost in cutting techniques against the owner of the black-hearted store, this did not prevent the customers from eating here.

"Oh my, is this your first time honoring our restaurant with your presence? Please, come in."

The moment Ni Yan and her disciples stepped into the store, the middle-aged but still attractive elder sister Chun approached while swinging her hips.

After Ni Yan gave elder sister Chun a glance, her mesmerizing eyes turned and looked in another direction, causing elder sister Chun to feel quite embarrassed.

After Tang Yin stepped forward and exchanged a few words with Elder sister Chun, she gleefully brought the three of them toward an empty table on the first floor.

As Ni Yan moved to sit down on the stool, her long robes slightly rose up and partially revealed her slender and fair legs. Then, her elegant eyebrows knitted together as she drew a line on the table with her finger and unhappily gave her assessment, "The hygiene is inadequate and poorly affects my appetite. I give a poor rating."

Elder sister Chun's eyebrows rose as her magnificent chest trembled... Why did these words sound so familiar to her?

"Bring me all of the dishes on the first floor that you think are first-rate!" Ni Yan said to elder sister Chun after finishing her assessment of the hygiene.

The sense of familiarity that elder sister Chun was feeling

became even stronger. She could not help but recall the last time when a young man spoke similar words. That handsome young man who was always expressionless...

Good heavens, could this woman be here to find fault as well?

Elder sister Chun was truly terrified by Bu Fang the other time.

However, since that was the customer's request... she could only follow them. Therefore, she arranged for someone to prepare the dishes.

While the dishes were being prepared, elder sister Chun gave Ni Yan an introduction of the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant's rules and layout.

"So, you're saying that this restaurant has three floors and the first floor is the worst?" Ni Yan asked. When elder sister Chun nodded, she stopped speaking after she softly replied, "Oh."

After waiting for a while, the first dish arrived. A waiter with a white towel draped over his shoulder came and placed a plate of Red Braised Lion's Head in front of Ni Yan.

Ni Yan removed her veil and her face that was so exquisite that would make one forget to breathe was suddenly exposed to elder sister Chun and that waiter.

The waiter was astonished. His eyes were almost popping out of their sockets... She was simply too beautiful! Her beauty was comparable to the imperial city's number one beauty, Xiao Yanyu!

However, after taking a small bite of the Lion's Head, Ni Yan knitted her eyebrows together. She suddenly started listing out a bunch of flaws regarding the Red Braised Lion's Head in a rapid manner. The waiter and elder sister Chun were dumbfounded as they woke up from their stupor.

Ni Yan's actions reminded them of the young man who gave the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant a thrashing the previous time...

Even though some slight changes were made to the Red Braised Lion's Head according to Bu Fang's evaluation, the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant did not spend too much effort on the dish since it was a first floor dish. As a result, the dish was heavily criticized by Ni Yan.

The other dishes suffered the same fate as well. Even though Ni Yan's appearance was extremely beautiful, her mouth was extremely cruel when criticizing the dishes. She was far more ruthless than Bu Fang.

Elder sister Chun was feeling very resentful after listening to her criticisms, and Ni Yan was planning to head to the second floor after finishing the first floor's dishes.

Since Tang Yin had the money, elder sister Chun was unable to stop them. She could only hurriedly contact Qian Bao, because she felt this beautiful woman was more capable at causing trouble than Bu Fang...

When Qian Bao hurried to the second floor, Ni Yan had already finished half of the dishes.

"Hmm? This flower crab isn't too bad. Even though the quality of the meat is terrible, the chef did an okay job with controlling the oil's temperature. The crab butter was cooked just right as well... This one is still alright, when compared with the other dishes," Ni Yan gave her assessment after having a bite of the Pan-Fried Flower Crab.

Qian Bao was standing on one side with tears all over his face. This woman was truly fearsome. She mentioned the exact same things as Bu Fang and even praised the places they revised according to Bu Fang's assessment.

"Overall, the dishes on the second floor are much better than the first floor. However, flaws are still present. Let's go to the third floor now," Ni Yan said as she stood up.

After hearing these words, Qian Bao's expression immediately turned awkward. Only those with venerable identities like the emperor were allowed on the third floor. The identity of the woman standing before them was completely unknown to him. It was impossible for him to let her step onto the third floor.

"I am sorry, but the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant's third floor is not open to ordinary customers for the time being," Qian Bao said.

Tang Yin and Lu Xiaoxiao were shocked. Ni Yan was stunned as well. She turned her head and her devastatingly beautiful eyes locked onto Qian Bao.

Qian Bao was feeling rather scared from her stare, so he forced himself to repeat his words.

Ni Yan was unhappy with his refusal. She coldly looked at Qian Bao and said while emphasizing every single word, "Let me go up, otherwise... I'll tear down your restaurant."

Qian Bao's expression immediately went cold. Was the woman in front of him planning to cause trouble here in his restaurant? He clapped his hands and three fifth grade Battle-King experts suddenly appeared.

"Dear customer, you'll need to consider your own capabilities before trying to cause trouble at my restaurant. Otherwise..."

Thump!!

Ni Yan lifted a hand and slightly pressed down. Suddenly, before Qian Bao could finish his words, the three Battle-Kings were pressed down onto the floor. The words that Qian Bao wanted to say were also stuck in his throat...

"Otherwise, what?" Ni Yan sweetly asked with a beautiful smile as she gave Qian Bao a glance.

cheap master (便宜师傅) - Someone who is either useless at teaching their disciples or easily gotten by their disciples.

Yuan Yuan's Little Stall (圆圆小铺) - Ni Yan was basically doing a wordplay here. Fang(方) means square while Yuan(圆) means circle.

Chapter 112: Deep-Fried Wandering Dragon Cow Meat Sausages

Cold sweat immediately started dripping down from Qian Bao's forehead. Forcing three Battle-Kings to lie down on the ground with just one hand... Just how powerful was this beautiful woman in front of him?

These three Battle-Kings were already the strongest defensive force within the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant. The faction behind him had only allocated these three experts for him to handle any sudden situations, and in the past, they had proven to be more than capable enough. Nevertheless, on that day, they encountered someone that the three could not handle.

Tang Yin, who was standing behind Ni Yan, sympathetically looked at the three Battle-Kings lying on the floor. Battle-Kings were nothing in front of a seventh grade Battle-Saint.

Ni Yan withdrew her hand and a smile suddenly appeared on her beautiful face as she said, "Owner Qian, you'll let us go onto the third floor now, right?"

Qian Bao actually wanted to say no. However, the capability of the woman in front of him was simply too terrifying. He felt that if he really refused her request, she might really tear down the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant.

Qian Bao wondered why his luck had been so terrible recently. The third floor's rule was actually broken twice in a row. This was purely an affront to the dignity of the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant.

"Yes..." Qian Bao agonizingly replied as he started walking, leading the three of them toward the third floor of the restaurant.

Ni Yan immediately chuckled and raised her pretty eyebrows as she followed after Qian Bao.

Stepping onto the antiquated third floor, the pleasant smell of sandalwood incense was wafting in the air, creating a relaxing mood. The third floor was decorated with many pretty ornaments and the view was quite beautiful.

"The furnishing is unexpectedly pretty good." Ni Yan nodded as she looked around. Suddenly, her eyes focused on something in a distance. Placed next to a table, there was a white tofu flower blooming with fur-like petals inside a crystal bowl.

"This... This is the work of a chef from the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant?" Ni Yan walked closer and attentively admired the tofu flower. The more seriously Ni Yan observed, the more astonished she became. She saw that the tofu flower was not just simply two or three layers, but was formed by a thousand layers stacked together...

Of course, the so-called thousand layer was not literally a thousand layer. However, the scene of the tofu densely packed together still made Ni Yan suck in a breath of cold air.

The cutting technique used to create this work had already reached an uncanny level. At the very least, Ni Yan conceded that her own cutting techniques were incapable of performing such a feat.

"No... This is the work of Owner Bu." Qian Bao sighed with emotion as he gazed at the thousand layer tofu flower. This piece of work was brought back by Qian Bao after the match with Bu Fang ended. He perfectly preserved the tofu flower and sealed it within a crystal bowl, making the tofu flower seem as if it was an exquisite piece of artwork and giving it an ornamental value. This was an idea that Qian Bao had suddenly come up with.

"Owner Bu?" Ni Yan puzzledly looked at Qian Bao.

Qian Bao raised his eyebrows. The woman in front of him who was so obsessed with food was actually... unaware of Owner Bu? Did they come from outside of the imperial city?

"Owner Bu is the owner of Fang Fang's Little Store," Qian Bao earnestly explained.

Tang Yin obviously knew who Bu Fang was and immediately became somewhat excited. As expected... the senior he knew was not someone who would be unknown within the imperial city.

Fang Fang's Little Store... Ni Yan narrowed her eyes. From the preciseness of the cutting technique, she could tell that the chef from Fang Fang's Little Store was definitely not an ordinary person. Involuntarily, Ni Yan's interest toward Fang Fang's Little Store became even stronger.

On the third floor of the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant, it was hard even for Bu Fang to find too many flaws in the three dishes. After improvements were made according to Bu Fang's assessment, the dishes were one step closer to perfection. Therefore, Ni Yan quietly finished the three dishes of delicious food that somewhat uplifted their mood.

"They're very delicious. As expected of the third floor, your chefs possess some capabilities indeed." Ni Yan put on her veil once more, concealing her peerless facial features. With a wave of her hand, she took out some gold coins and handed them to Qian Bao.

Qian Bao was quite surprised that he could still receive the money... With the woman's strength, Qian Bao would not be able to defy her even if she tried to dine and dash...

"Have someone bring us to that Fang Fang's Little Store. I am very curious about the sort of food the chef who could perform such a cutting technique would make," Ni Yan said.

"Owner Bu's dishes are definitely delicious. It's just that the price is rather expensive, that's all..."

"Money? Money is not an issue. You just have to bring us there." Lu Xiaoxiao, who remained quiet all this time, finally spoke up. They were not lacking in wealth at all.

Since the other party expressed their indifference, Qian Bao personally led them toward that small restaurant situated in an alleyway.

...

White snow swirled around in the skies, scattering snowflakes here and there and covering the entire imperial city with a layer of silver frost.

As Bu Fang removed the door boards, the cold air mixed with a few pieces of snowflakes instantly rushed into the store, causing him to slightly shiver for a moment.

After preparing the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs for Blacky, Bu Fang returned to the kitchen once more. There was an especially important matter he had to settle that morning.

Bu Fang was very serious as he stopped in front of the cupboard where the Wandering Dragon Cow sausages were being dry-cured. As he carefully opened the cupboard, a burst of meaty aroma accompanied with a medicinal fragrance gushed out.

Bu Fang reached his hand out and pinched one of the sausages. He could feel a slight springiness coming from the sausage. This indicated that the sausage had finally been dry-cured to a degree he desired. The sausage coating was rather hard and there was a slight springiness when pinched. This proved that the sausage had already been dry-cured.

Suppressing the agitation in his heart, Bu Fang took out the twenty one sausages from the cupboard. Cutting off one of the sausages, he stored the rest of them inside the refrigerator.

Bu Fang could not wait to cook this sausage that he had been looking forward to for some time. However, he still needed to make some preparations before doing that.

He first poured some oil into the wok and waited until the heat coming from the oil's surface was slightly hot before putting the

sausage into the oil.

Once the sausage entered the oil, a sizzling sound immediately sounded out from the wok. White waves of oil enveloped the sausage and continuously bubbled, appearing like somewhat cloudy snowflakes.

The fragrance of the oil and the meaty aroma of the sausage instantly spread out from the wok and filled the entire kitchen. The smell of the spirit herbs were blended with these aroma as well, forming a fragrance that could cause one to lose their self control just from inhaling the aroma.

The smell was simply too fragrant. Even Bu Fang couldn't help but salivate.

He did not actually include too many steps within the cooking process of the sausage because there was no need for them. He had already completed everything else that was necessary. Now, he only needed to wait for the sausage to be cooked.

Since the sausage coating was made from the submucosa of a seventh grade Wandering Dragon Cow, ordinary oil was not warm enough to deep-fry the sausage. Therefore, during the cooking process, Bu Fang had to carefully send true energy into the wok of oil in order to infuse heat into the sausage.

Once the intensity of the fragrance wafting in the air reached a certain level, Bu Fang swiftly used chopsticks to remove the sausage from the wok of oil. After the oil on the sausage was filtered away, a rosy and shiny sausage was presented before Bu Fang.

A meaty aroma accompanied with a medicinal fragrance wafted out from the sausage and continuously flowed into Bu Fang's nostrils. Before Bu Fang could even taste the sausage, he was already feeling his taste buds being covered and conquered by this aroma.

A wisp of green smoke appeared for a moment and the Golden Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife was held in Bu Fang's hand. He carefully sliced the sausage into three pieces. The moment the sausage coating was cut open, the beefy aroma contained within the sausage coating billowed out as if a bomb had exploded. The smell was even stronger than before and reached almost every corner of the store.

At the entrance, Blacky was gobbling down the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs while wagging its tail when it suddenly stopped. Then, its eyes blinked as it raised its head and started sniffing the air... What smell was that? It smelled so good!

Qian Bao was leading Ni Yan and her disciples, and they had just arrived before the store. Before they could even enter the store, a surging wave of meaty aroma completely enveloped their sense of smell, causing them to be completely captivated by the fragrance.

Whether it was Qian Bao, who had the lowest cultivation level, or Ni Yan, who was a seventh grade Battle-Saint, they were all captivated by the meaty aroma of the sausage.

Just by slicing open a big sausage, the entire Long Street was wafting with fragrance.

Chapter 113: You Are Customers, But It Isn't

"This meat... smells so good! How can it be so fragrant?!"

Ni Yan's devastatingly beautiful eyes were filled with incredulity as they slightly widened. The rich smell of meat wafted toward her and flowed into her beautiful nose. Suddenly, all of the pores throughout her body seemed to have exploded.

As someone who was both a chef and a glutton, Ni Yan's pastime was sampling and researching all kinds of food. She once tried to cook a dish using a sixth grade spirit beast, but she unfortunately failed. The meat of a sixth grade spirit beast was filled with a rich amount of spirit energy. However, once these spirit beasts perished, the spirit energy would be locked within their carcasses. If a person sliced off a piece of meat from the carcass, the spirit energy contained inside that piece of meat would rapidly dissipate.

With her experience, Ni Yan was able to instantly analyze the composition of the aroma wafting in the air. She not only detected a meaty aroma, but also a medicinal fragrance and a rich amount of spirit energy as well.

The concentration of spirit energy in the air made her feel incredulous.

Qian Bao was continuously swallowing his saliva. He thought, "This fragrance... Not even our restaurant's most delicious dish, the Roasted Flower Duck, could compare with this smell. As expected, Owner Bu's culinary skills is extraordinary. I must definitely have a taste of his cooking today."

The expressions of Tang Yin and Lu Xiaoxiao, who were standing behind Ni Yan, were both filled with euphoria. This was not the first time that they had encountered such a rich meaty aroma. Previously, when they were in the wildlands, Bu Fang had cooked a roast meat with a strong fragrance as well. Even till that day, the flavor of the roast meat was still unforgettable for them.

Bu Fang was carrying a porcelain plate with three pieces of sliced sausages scattered on the top. A slight warmth was lingering around the surface of the sausage. There was also a wave of fragrance that was close to solidifying melding together with the spirit energy.

Bu Fang could not wait to have a taste of this overwhelmingly fragrant sausage. He had just stepped out of the kitchen when he saw the four people standing at the doorway with euphoric expressions. A trace of doubt appeared on his face as he exclaimed, "Eh? Someone's here so early today?"

Normally, there would not be any customers at such an early hour. Even Fatty Jin who always came on time would usually take a while to arrive.

"Senior! It's us!"

When Tang Yin saw that familiar appearance and that familiar smell, his eyes immediately lit up as he excitedly waved his hand toward Bu Fang.

"Hmm?" Bu Fang gave Tang Yin a glance. After thinking for a moment, he finally recognized the man who was waving to him at such an early hour. The encounter at the wildlands left quite a deep impression on him.

"Oh, it's you. It's been a while. Are you here to eat? Come in," Bu Fang expressionlessly said before placing the plate in his hands on a table.

The eyes of the four humans plus a dog all followed Bu Fang's actions and fell on the table. The sound of swallowing resounded throughout the room.

Everyone subconsciously stepped into the store. Their eyes were all focused on Bu Fang, who had already sat down at the table. He was holding onto a pair of chopsticks and was about to start eating.

Bu Fang was unconcerned about the actions of the others. The

wooden chopsticks in his hand opened and Bu Fang gently clamped one of the three pieces of sausage. The moment the chopsticks squeezed together, an aromatic grease naturally seeped out of the sausage.

The fragrance wafting in the air suddenly became even stronger.

Bu Fang carefully observed the piece of sausage. The place where the cut was made was extremely smooth and the meat inside was tender and fragrant. Bu Fang's appetite was being aroused just from looking at the sausage.

As Bu Fang took a bite of the sausage, the sound of his teeth colliding together with the crispy sausage casing seemingly could be heard.

While Bu Fang was taking a bite, Qian Bao and the others slightly opened their mouths as well and subconsciously licked their lips...

The texture of the sausage was very springy, and the crispy sausage casing as well as the tender beef filling instantly enveloped Bu Fang's mouth. The fragrance lingered in his mouth like a thick fog and was impossible to dispel.

Since the sausage was slightly hot, Bu Fang tried to cool it down by opening his mouth. He exhaled a breath of hot air along with the sausage's fragrance.

Gulp...

"Bark!"

Rumbling noises sounded out from the stomachs of the four, and Blacky barked once while licking its lip.

However, at that moment, Bu Fang was completely immersed within the delicious flavor. After he began chewing, only then was he able to perfectly experience the taste of the sausage. Since a little rock sugar was mixed within the sausage, the sausage casing was not only crispy but also a little sweet. It became even more flavorful and caused the meaty aroma to burst forth like an

explosion and instantly charge out from Bu Fang's nostrils.

"It's delicious!" Bu Fang exclaimed. The familiar flavor of the sausage made him feel nostalgic. The sausage made from the meat of the Wandering Dragon Cow as well as various spirit herbs tasted even more superb.

It was the meat of a seventh grade spirit beast after all. As expected, it was not something that ordinary meat could compare with.

After swallowing the mouthful of sausage, Bu Fang licked his lips while feeling unsatisfied. His eyes seemed somewhat blurry...

"Hmm? Why are you guys looking at me like that?" When Bu Fang woke from his daze, he puzzledly looked at the others. The drooling appearance of the four humans plus a dog made it impossible for Bu Fang to not feel amused.

"Are you the one who cooked this sausage?" Ni Yan asked as her beautiful eyes stared straight at Bu Fang.

Bu Fang nodded as he shoved the rest of the bitten sausage into his mouth.

"I... Can I have a taste?" Ni Yan hesitated for a moment before asking.

The others were also looking at Bu Fang with expressions filled with expectation. The smell of the sausage was simply too enticing. It was so fragrant that they were not themselves.

Bu Fang gave her a glance and indifferently said, "No."

Ni Yan was stunned. Tang Yin was stunned. Everyone was stunned... Oh, Blacky was not stunned. It was still licking its lips and looking at Bu Fang with eyes that were filled with expectation.

Someone actually refused her? Ni Yan was somewhat bewildered. How many years had it been since she faced such a situation?

Ni Yan took off her veil and revealed her devastatingly beautiful

and peerless appearance. Her delicate, red lips slightly curled up and her pretty eyes stared straight at Bu Fang as she asked, "Now... Can I have a taste of the sausage?"

Ni Yan was more confident about her appearance than her strength. She was certain that no one would be able to remain composed after witnessing her appearance.

However, she was wrong this time. When Bu Fang gave her another glance, astonishment flashed across his eyes and then he still indifferently replied, "No."

"You..." Ni Yan was exasperated. How could he speak like that to a beauty like her?!

"Then, why don't you tell me, what do I have to do in order to taste the sausage..." Ni Yan was really itching to slap this fellow in front of her to death. However, when she thought about how such a delicious sausage could only be made by this despicable fellow, she was unable to do it.

"Are you stupid? Look at the menu." Bu Fang pursed his lips and picked up another sausage. He delightfully shove the sausage into his mouth and chewed it with relish.

When Ni Yan saw Bu Fang's infuriating expression while enjoying the sausage, she was really tempted to kick his face in. While enduring the enticing fragrance of the sausage, she raised her head and looked toward the menu hung on the store's wall. The moment she looked, her beautiful eyes widened once more.

"Bark!!"

Blacky was furious! It thought, "How dare this rascal ignore this lord dog! How could you not offer up such a delicious sausage to your lord dog?!"

Bu Fang went into a daze for a moment. He rubbed the lord dog's head and softly said, "Stop messing around."

"Who's messing around with who!" Blacky thought as it roared

out once more. This roar was filled with his tremendous anger as well as his yearning toward the sausage. "Bark!"

Bu Fang sighed in his heart. He knew he would not be able to eat this last piece of sausage. He grudgingly patted Blacky's head and handed over the sausage to it.

Blacky's eyes were gleaming and its tongue was hanging out as it excitedly swallowed the sausage with one bite. Thereafter, it narrowed its eyes and had an expression filled with satisfaction.

Ni Yan had just turned back. She wanted to question Bu Fang about the unreasonable pricing. However, before she could say anything, she witnessed a scene where Bu Fang was feeding the sausage to a dog...

Bu Fang was feeding the sausage that was so delicious that they were unable to control themselves to a big black dog... A black dog... A dog!

"What do you mean by that... What's your basis for letting the dog eat when I couldn't?" Ni Yan asked with a cold expression.

Bu Fang had stood up and was picking up the plate and chopsticks when he heard Ni Yan's question. He immediately gave her a puzzled glance and said, "There's no particular reason. You're customers, but it isn't."

After he finished speaking, he headed toward the kitchen. When he reached the doorway, he suddenly remembered something and turned his head toward the others.

"Here's a reminder, only three servings of Wandering Dragon Cow Sausage are provided each day. If you want to eat them, you should quickly order."

Chapter 114: This Is A Secret

Bu Fang watched as the three Wandering Dragon Cow Meat Sausages rolled about inside of the wok filled with oil. Even though he had already eaten a sausage, he couldn't help but crave for more after smelling the fragrance exuding from the sausages. A dish made from the meat of a seventh grade spirit beast simply possessed too much allure.

"He might as well rob someone... Selling a single sausage for two hundred fifty crystals, he's practically demented!" Ni Yan could not help but silently curse as she sat down in a huff.

Sitting next to her, Tang Yin could not refrain from feeling somewhat dumbfounded. Even though the price was two hundred fifty crystals per sausage, they still bought them in the end... The ones who bought the sausages, weren't they even more demented?

Next to them, Qian Bao sucked in a breath of cold air. As expected of the store well-known as black-hearted within the imperial city, a single sausage... was actually being sold for two hundred fifty crystals. That was almost equivalent to an entire week of the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant's earnings. He actually could not even afford to eat a single sausage.

Glancing at the big black dog that was delightfully lying at the entrance, Ni Yan became infuriated. Such a delicious sausage was eaten by a big black dog just like that. It was simply a waste of good food.

However, there was nothing else she could do. Like Bu Fang had said, she came to the store as a customer. If she wanted to taste the dishes, she would naturally need to make an order and pay for them with crystals. That big black dog was not a customer, so Bu Fang could just feed it with the sausage.

Simply put, this was an issue with their identities. Even though Ni Yan was angry, she could still reluctantly accept this reason.

After Ni Yan looked through the menu, she was frankly shocked internally. Every single dish on the menu was ridiculously expensive. However, contrary to her expectations, there really were customers who patronised the store.

Looking at the obese men wrapped within their overcoats in the next table, Ni Yan was slightly speechless.

By Fang soon walked out of the kitchen while holding two white porcelain plates in his hands. The sliced pieces of two of the Wandering Dragon Cow Meat Sausages were scattered on the plates. A rich fragrance that was close to solidifying wafted out from the porcelain bowls.

How fragrant! Everyone within the store was attracted by the smell. They could not help but sniff the air, hoping to smell even more of the fragrance.

"This is the Wandering Dragon Cow Meat Sausage that you ordered, please enjoy your meal," Bu Fang said to Ni Yan and then placed the other plate in front of Tang Yin. He turned around and went back into the kitchen and then came back with the last plate, placing it before Lu Xiaoxiao.

The three of them eagerly started eating. Tang Yin swallowed a piece of sausage with a single bite. His eyes almost popped out as he vigorously chewed the food in his mouth, seemingly intending to even swallow his own tongue.

Lu Xiaoxiao's appearance while eating was pretty similar to Tang Yin. She was completely immersed within the delicious flavor and was unable to control herself.

On the other hand, Ni Yan was more rational. She was solemnly sizing up the sausage and evaluating the dish by carefully observing its color, smell, appearance, and various other aspects.

After understanding the situation, Ni Yan picked up a piece of sausage and began slowly savoring its flavor in her mouth... The

rich meaty flavor was like a stream as it gradually blossomed in her mouth, causing both of her body and mind to be captivated by the deliciousness.

"How fragrant! How delicious! Is this really a sausage? This is the most delicious sausage I've ever had!" Ni Yan was extremely astonished. She had completely fallen.

The corners of Bu Fang's mouth widened into a smile as he watched the three of them eating with relish. He turned around and headed back into the kitchen to start preparing the dishes of Fatty Jin and the others.

When Bu Fang had fulfilled all the orders, Ni Yan and her disciples had also recovered from the deliciousness of the Wandering Dragon Cow Meat Sausages. They were looking at Bu Fang with strange gazes.

Ni Yan's eyes were staring straight at Bu Fang. Her gaze was seemingly intending to swallow Bu Fang in a single bite. "Tell me, how did you prevent the spirit energy within the meat of the spirit beasts from dissipating! I've been researching this sort of technique for a long time, but I've still been unable to control the spirit energy residing within the meat of the spirit beasts!"

Immediately after taking the first bite, Ni Yan understood why Bu Fang was selling the sausages at such an expensive price. The effects of eating one of his sausages were more potent than swallowing a sixth grade elixir. The spirit energy contained within the sausage was beyond her imagination.

The meat used to produce this sausage was definitely not from an ordinary spirit beast... Wandering Dragon Cow, could it be that Wandering Dragon Cow?!

Bu Fang wiped off the water droplets on his hands and gave Ni Yan a glance. The eyes of this peerless beauty were filled with the thirst for knowledge. Her large eyes, which seemed to contain circulating water ripples, were filled with expectation as she stared

at Bu Fang. Even Bu Fang was nearly moved by her.

"This is a secret," Bu Fang said.

Ni Yan was exasperated... She nearly forgot that beauty was useless in front of this blockheaded fellow.

"Once the meat of a spirit beast was damaged, the spirit energy contained inside would dissipate. The higher the grade of the spirit beast, the faster the rate of dissipation... From the looks of this meat, the grade of the spirit beast it came from is definitely not low. How did you do it?"

"This is a secret," Bu Fang replied.

Ni Yan's complexion darkened. At that moment, she had an impulse to turn this infuriating fellow into minced meat with a single slap...

"Then, you should at least be able to tell me the grade of the spirit beast that this meat came from, right?" Ni Yan asked in a huff. The incredible concentration of spirit energy within the meat gave Ni Yan some suspicions of her own. However, she was still unsure... If her suspicions really were true, it would be really terrifying.

"This is a sec... Oh, I can tell you this." Bu Fang was going to give the same answer out of habit, but he paused for a moment and quickly changed his reply.

The true energy within Ni Yan's body started moving erratically as she endured the urge to throw out a punch. You even got into a habit of saying it was a secret?

"Why do you think a sausage could be sold for such an expensive price?" Bu Fang asked as he looked Ni Yan. "That's because the meat itself is expensive. This meat is from a seventh grade Wandering Dragon Cow..."

...

Ten miles away from the imperial city's gate, the third prince's

army had set up camp on an empty plain. They did not choose to enter the imperial city.

The third prince took off his military attire and changed into a refined white robe. He elegantly stood in front of the troops with two people following behind him. One of them was wearing a bamboo hat with a black veil, while the other was a vigorous person who was both tall and burly.

"Your Highness, entering the imperial city would definitely be perilous. Your subordinate must accompany you at all times, in order to ensure Your Highness' safety!" The tall and burly man opened his mouth and said.

Ji Chengxue helplessly glanced at the man, but he did not refuse him. He slowly headed toward the towering imperial city underneath the morning sun with his hands held behind his back.

As he stepped through the city gate, the winter wind was blowing but he still felt a familiar feeling rushing into his face.

Ji Chengxue felt nostalgic as he looked at the streets of the imperial city. There was not much difference from before he left, but he could still feel a bit of change.

From a distance, two groups of people were slowly approaching to receive Ji Chengxue.

"We welcome the third prince's return to the imperial city. Would Your Highness please enter King Yu's manor for a chat," an elderly official said to Ji Chengxue. His tone was actually not considered respectful.

Ji Chengxue recognized this person. He was a high-ranking official within the imperial courts. From the looks of it, he chose to side with King Yu.

Nevertheless, this was not a good enough reason for his arrogant attitude. Ji Chengxue expressionlessly gave the man a cold glance and the corners of his mouth curled up as he said, "Your

Excellency, how arrogant you are. No matter how much of a dire straits I am in, I am still a prince. While I was fighting and killing our enemies outside of the border, I wonder which brothel Your Excellency was staying in. What's your basis for talking to me in such a manner?"

That court official was immediately startled. His pupils constricted and his entire back was dripping with cold sweat.

The burly man standing behind Ji Chengxue immediately gave an angry snort as he stepped forward and ferociously glared at the court official. The court official was so frightened that he took several steps backward and fell on his buttocks. This court official was only a scholar. How could he withstand the angry glare from a man who was like a vicious beast.

From a distance, another group of people slowly approached. The person leading them was a young eunuch. They were evidently the crown Prince's subordinates.

"This humble servants greets Your Highness. The crown prince found out that Your Highness has returned to the imperial city today, so he specially ordered this humble servant to receive and invite Your Highness to enter the imperial palace for a chat with him." The young eunuch was a good talker and his attitude was reverential and respectful.

Ji Chengxue's expression slightly improved and he nodded.

However, even though he nodded, he did not show any intentions of moving. He swept his gaze over the two group of people and started chuckling.

A gentle voice sounded out from his mouth.

"Go back and tell my dearest elder brothers, tell them that I am exhausted after a long trip and I don't want to see them. If they have anything to say, we'll talk... during father's funeral."

Chapter 115: Master, Don't Just Focus On Eating

King Yu's manor, in the middle of the pavilions next to a pond.

King Yu was calm and composed as he slowly walked along a covered walkway with his hands held behind his back. He was wearing a long robe with a feather cloak draped over his shoulders.

Behind him, the high-ranking official who went to receive the third prince had a trace of fear on his face as he followed King Yu without making a single sound.

"You're saying that my third brother rejected the invitations from both me and the crown prince?" King Yu's indifferent voice sounded out, startling the high-ranking official. That high-ranking official hurriedly nodded in response.

King Yu suddenly started to chuckle with a laughter that contained a trace of amusement. The corners of his mouth curled up as he stared at the pure white snow that covered the courtyard.

"What's this supposed to be? Now that your wings have grown tough, you have come to participate in this mess? The situation within the imperial city is already chaotic enough... do you think it's not chaotic enough?" King Yu muttered to himself. He seemed to be questioning something and then a trace of disdain appeared on his face.

"You're just a prince that was almost abandoned... What right do you have to compete with me?"

...

Next to the Gate of Heavenly Mystery, in the crown prince palace.

Two figures were standing straight, looking into the distance from the crown prince palace. They could nearly see the entire

plaza of the Gate of Heavenly Mystery from where they stood.

"Regarding my third brother's return, does elder Zhao have any questions or suggestions?" The crown prince looked toward the elderly man standing next to him. Calling him elderly was not actually correct. Even though Zhao Musheng's hair had already turned white, his facial features were not considered old.

Zhao Musheng's gaze was both cloudy and everchanging, as if he could see through the fickleness of the world. He indifferently said, "There's no need for the crown prince to be worried. Even though the third prince is a noble prince, he was still disregarded by the former emperor after all. After spending long periods of time on expeditions outside the border, he has the air of a soldier ingrained upon him. He's destined to have no connection with the throne."

The crown prince was immediately pleased when he heard those words. Even though he was not really concerned about his third brother, the interference of a prince—while the imperial city was in such a chaotic situation—was enough to create some disturbances.

Zhao Musheng gave the crown prince a glance and put up a faint smile. "With the support of the Ouyang family and Yang family, as well as the Zhao family, what other worries does the crown prince have? So what if His Majesty's will has not been announced? With your subjects' support, Your Highness only needs to wait for your enthronement."

There seemed to be some kind of magic in Zhao Musheng's words. The anxiety in the crown prince's mind could not help but be soothed, making him feel at ease. Even though the crown prince kept feeling something was strange, he was unable to find the source of the strangeness.

"Your Highness, this Gate of Heavenly Mystery was built by the Light Wind Empire's founding emperor. According to legends, a

spirit array was engraved into this place. Is there any truth to this?" Zhao Musheng asked as he pointed toward the vast plaza of the Gate of Heavenly Mystery in a distance.

The crown prince was startled for a moment. He looked toward the plaza of the Gate of Heavenly Mystery that had long since been covered by a layer of pure white snow.

"There are indeed mentions of the Gate of Heavenly Mystery's oddness within the records left by our forefathers. However, the earliest record is already dating back to a few hundred years ago. Now, we have no way of verifying the truth. At least, father has never made any mentions about the Gate of Heavenly Mystery having a spirit array. Perhaps... this is just a legend," the crown prince said.

Zhao Musheng seriously sized up the crown prince for a moment. When he saw that the crown prince did not seem to be lying, he knitted his eyebrows together.

"Is it really only a legend?"

...

"Here's your Golden Shumai, please enjoy your meal."

Bu Fang said as he placed a bamboo steamer filled with piping hot Golden Shumai in front of Ni Yan. When he subconsciously glanced toward the porcelain plates on the table, he realized this woman had actually ordered every single dish in his store.

Ni Yan's pretty eyes immediately lit up when she saw the glittering Golden Shumai. She hurriedly nodded and swallowed the last piece of Red Braised Meat in her mouth.

"Burp... It's been a long time since I've tasted such delicious food!"

After letting out a burp, Ni Yan stretched her rosy tongue out and licked her petal-like, tender, red lips. Her pearly white teeth were partly visible. Her dazed expression was filled with charm.

The corners of Bu Fang's mouth curled up as he glanced at her actions. He wiped off the water droplets on his hands before pulling over a chair and sat down opposite to Ni Yan.

Tang Yin and Lu Xiaoxiao had ordered some dishes as well, but they were already full from eating. However, even though she was a woman and a beautiful one at that, Ni Yan was unexpectedly eating without a care in the world. Her appearance while eating was completely like that of a veteran glutton.

As she picked up a Golden Shumai with her chopsticks, the slight squeeze immediately caused the oil within the shumai to shake and almost spill out. Ni Yan carefully held her hand below the chopsticks as she ate the shumai with a single bite. She looked really adorable with her cheeks bulging from the food in her mouth.

"Senior... I didn't expect that you really were an authentic chef," Tang Yin exclaimed as he looked at Bu Fang. He always thought that was just an excuse for Bu Fang to conceal his identity.

"I am as real as real can get. I am a professional chef, the chef of a small restaurant located in the imperial city," Bu Fang said with a nod.

Lu Xiaoxiao's large eyes blinked as she looked at Bu Fang. She was feeling slightly suspicious about how Bu Fang's current behavior was completely different from how he was in the Wildlands...

However, when she saw her own master wolfing down her food in an unladylike manner, her suspicions toward Bu Fang were immediately dispelled... Compared to her own gluttonous master, this senior was simply far more exemplary.

"Senior, may I ask whether the Phoenix Blood Herb from the Fallen Phoenix Valley is in your possession?" Lu Xiaoxiao seriously asked.

Bu Fang was slightly surprised when he heard this question. He expressionlessly gave her a glance and nodded without concealing the truth.

At that time, the two of them probably went back to the Valley of the Fallen Phoenix after getting into safety. When they discovered the Phoenix Blood Herb was already harvested, they naturally suspected Bu Fang...

Seeing that Bu Fang did not deny, a trace of delight immediately appeared on Lu Xiaoxiao's face. She hurriedly turned toward her master, only to discover that Ni Yan had once more picked up another two Golden Shumai and was shoving them into her mouth with a face filled with happiness.

"Master... Don't forget our purpose for coming to the imperial city!" Lu Xiaoxiao thought, while not knowing whether to laugh or cry. This gluttonous master of hers immediately forgot about everything else once she found something delicious.

"Junior sister, there's no need to hurry. Senior is right here. We can discuss the matter of the Phoenix Blood Herb after master has finished eating." Tang Yin slightly frowned as he gave Lu Xiaoxiao a glance.

Bu Fang leaned on his chair as he glanced toward the three of them. He looked pensive as he thought, "So, the objective of these three for coming to the store is the Phoenix Blood Herb..."

"Haha! Owner Bu, it's been a long time."

Just when Bu Fang was contemplating, a gallant laughter suddenly came from outside. This laughter was somewhat familiar and interrupted Bu Fang's contemplation.

Bu Fang puzzledly looked toward the entrance and saw two figures stepping into the store together.

That person who was laughing, was he not Ji Chengxue, the third prince who had just returned after an expedition outside the

border?

There was also a man wearing a bamboo hat with a face veil standing next to Ji Chengxue. His figure was rather familiar as well.

"Hmm? It's you? Did you just come back from your business trip?" Bu Fang asked with a smile.

Ji Chengxue was startled, seemingly unable to understand Bu Fang's words. However, that did not matter. With a smile, he sat down at a table and urgently said, "Owner Bu, it's been a while since I've drunk the Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine. I am really craving for a jar right now. Hurry and give me a serving."

Bu Fang nodded. As he stood up, he looked toward the man wearing a bamboo hat with a face veil and asked, "What about you?"

"I'll have the same." A hoarse voice sounded out as the man took off his bamboo hat, revealing a handsome face that was familiar to Bu Fang. Xiao Yue chuckled as he nodded toward Bu Fang.

It was the two of them as Bu Fang had expected, but he was still somewhat puzzled. Why would the two of them be hanging out together?

"Are you not going to order any side dishes to go with the wine?" Bu Fang asked as he turned around after reaching the entrance to the kitchen.

"No, I just want the wine. I am here today to sate my craving for wine," Ji Chengxue said with a smile as he shook his head. Xiao Yue responded the same way as well. Bu Fang immediately felt a tinge of disappointment as he entered the kitchen.

Xiao Yue was sitting opposite to Ji Chengxue. When his gaze landed on the face of the peerless beauty that was gobbling down her food, he stared blankly at her for a moment.

Thereafter, Xiao Yue's pupils constricted as he suddenly sucked

in a breath of cold air.

"This woman... Why would she be here?"

Chapter 116: Fine Wine, Dragon's Breath

Xiao Yue recognized this woman. Or, to put it differently, there were very few people within the top experts of the ten great sects that could not recognize this outrageously beautiful woman.

"The Celestial Arcanum Sect's... third elder!" Xiao Yue's eyes narrowed as he stared at the scene of Ni Yan gorging herself with food and took a deep breath.

Leaving aside Ni Yan's cultivation level, her identity as the elder of the Celestial Arcanum Sect alone was enough to attract Xiao Yue's attention. Even though the Celestial Arcanum Sect was considered part of the ten great sects, strictly speaking, they had already transcended the level of the group.

The Celestial Arcanum Sect focused on divination and Astrology. Each and every one of their disciples were extremely mysterious and the ones roaming about in the world were all at least fifth grade Battle-Kings. Furthermore, their combat capabilities were strong and they were experts at setting up magic arrays to battle their enemies. They were an existence that every sect was wary about.

The Celestial Arcanum Sect's legacy dated back a long time ago. Furthermore, they rarely involved themselves with worldly matters and did not have any form of interaction with the imperial power. Even though Emperor Changfeng was aiming to destroy the ten great sects, he had never made any bold claims about eradicating the Celestial Arcanum Sect.

The sect was like a taboo that elicited reverence from many people.

Furthermore, as the third elder of the Celestial Arcanum Sect, Ni Yan's cultivation level had reached the level of seventh grade Battle-Saint. She was not any weaker than the Light Wind Empire's number one guardian, Xiao Meng.

"This woman... Why would she appear here in the imperial city at such a sensitive time?" Xiao Yue was truly feeling somewhat puzzled. According to the Celestial Arcanum Sect's usual way of doing things, they should have no interest in worldly affairs or matters related to the imperial power...

"What are you looking at! Have you never seen a beauty before?!" Lu Xiaoxiao said in dissatisfaction as she widened her eyes and gave Xiao Yue a glare.

She knew this gluttonous master of hers was outrageously beautiful, but this rather good-looking man was actually staring at her in such an open manner. What a shameless fellow!

When Tang Yin gave Xiao Yue a glance as well, his dashing eyebrows knitted together and he became on guard.

This was the ability of experts to sense each other. Xiao Yue's cultivation level had already reached the pinnacle of Battle-Emperor and Tang Yin was a Battle-Emperor as well. Their combat capabilities were evenly matched and the both of them could naturally sense a dangerous aura from each other.

"Hmm? What's going on?" Ji Chengxue puzzledly asked when he felt the destructive aura exuding from Xiao Yue. Thereafter, he turned his head and looked toward Ni Yan and her disciples.

"These three people... are not simple," Xiao Yue serenely said as the aura exuding from his body suddenly dissipated. Within Bu Fang's store, he neither wanted—nor dared—to cause trouble. He still remembered the terrifying combat capability of that puppet as well as that thing lying at the entrance, that... supreme beast.

Tang Yin dispelled his aura as well and looked away. The two of them seemed to have reached a tacit understanding and resolved the situation in silence.

Bu Fang soon walked out of the kitchen, grabbing two jars of Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine in his hands.

This gluttonous woman, Ni Yan, seemed to be only interested in food and unexpectedly did not order the Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine.

"Here's your wine, please enjoy," Bu Fang said as he placed the jars onto the table.

Xiao Yue and Ji Chengxue were already close to reaching their limits. They each grabbed a jar of wine and removed the cloth covers.

When the rich aroma of the wine instantly pervaded the air, Xiao Yue and Ji Chengxue were immediately intoxicated by this enchanting aroma and they were unable to control themselves.

This wine aroma... Ni Yan and her disciples were attracted by the aroma of the wine as well. Their eyes suddenly widened as they looked toward the Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine.

Ni Yan shoved the last piece of Golden Shumai into her mouth and finally finished eating every single dish in Bu Fang's store. She had an enjoyable time eating the food. At least, she subconsciously felt delighted when looking at the entire table filled with porcelain plates.

"The aroma of this wine is pretty good," Ni Yan stood up and lazily stretched her body. She fondled her belly before walking over to Xiao Yue and Ji Chengxue's table.

"Owner Bu's Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine is the best wine that I've ever drunk. Would the young lady like to have a taste?" Ji Chengxue gently said with a smile.

Ni Yan blinked for a moment and naturally took up the offer. She requested a porcelain cup from Bu Fang, placed it in front of Ji Chengxue and said, "Fill it to the brim."

"The best wine that you've ever tasted, hehe, is this better than the 'Dragon's Breath' brewed by the old drunkard?" Ni Yan murmured with a smile.

A clear liquid like spring water was poured into the porcelain

cup, filling it to the brim. Ni Yan lifted the porcelain cup and took a small sip. The bitterness immediately spread in her mouth.

"Hmm? The taste is unexpectedly pretty good." Ni Yan smacked her lips and said with a nod, "However, compared to the 'Dragon's Breath' brewed by the old drunkard, it's still lacking by a little bit."

Bu Fang was somewhat surprised. This was the first time someone said that his wine was inferior to another wine. This made him very curious.

"Is 'Dragon's Breath' a type of wine?" Bu Fang asked.

Ni Yan looked toward Bu Fang and raised her eyebrows as she thought, "Even a rascal like you has moments where you have questions to ask me." She nodded in a tsundere-like manner and said with a snort, "I admit that the taste of the dishes in your store are pretty good, but... I've eaten dishes that are far more delicious than your food. Since the Hidden Dragon Continent is so vast, there's naturally a lot of delicious flavors. There are artificial flavors as well as natural flavors... It's only natural for there to be food that are more delicious than yours," Ni Yan said.

Bu Fang agreed with what she said. Even though he was confident, he was not arrogant. He nodded with a somewhat serious and solemn expression on his face.

"Let's take 'Dragon's Breath' for instance. The old drunkard's Dragon's Breath use several hundred types of valuable spirit herbs. In order to brew this wine, it needs to be placed at the bottom of the crater lake at Mount Tiandang and allow it to ferment for three years. The color of the liquid is like a burning flame and is exceptionally beautiful. It tastes bitter with a tinge of mellowness. After drinking a mouthful, you'll feel as if you're standing under a dragon's fire breath and both your body and mind will feel renewed."

"Even though this wine is pretty good as well, it's still lacking a little compared to the 'Dragon's Breath'," Ni Yan truthfully said.

The old drunkard was a mysterious expert from the Celestial Arcanum Sect and his cultivation level was unfathomable. At the very least, Ni Yan was unable to see through his cultivation level. Moreover, she was fortunate enough to have drunk a small cup of that 'Dragon's Breath'. The wine left her with an extremely deep impression, and therefore she gave such a speech.

"System, our wine seems to have lost," Bu Fang said to the system.

The system did not reply immediately and was silent for a long time. It was so long that Bu Fang nearly assumed the system did not feel like replying him.

Abrupt mission: Would the host please research and create your own wine that can surpass the 'Dragon's Breath' and subdue the old drunkard.

(Young man, there will be many obstacles on the path to maturity! Destroy the obstacles! Spread your wings and soar!)

System reward: Dragon Blood Rice and ten percent of true energy cultivation progression.

The system's serious and very solemn voice suddenly rang out next to Bu Fang's ears, causing him to jump in surprise. Thereafter, Bu Fang was feeling somewhat dumbfounded... The system just issued an abrupt mission at the slightest disagreement.

Furthermore, the abrupt mission this time was rather interesting. He had to create a better wine than the 'Dragon's Breath' that Ni Yan introduced. The difficulty was... higher than usual.

While Bu Fang was lost in thought, Ni Yan had already finished the cup of wine. Looking at her, she was indeed uninterested in the Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine.

"Burp..." Ni Yan let out another burp and a cloud of spirit energy gushed out from between her tender, petal-like, red lips.

Her pretty face was slightly reddened, making her beautiful beyond comparison. After eating so much delicious food that was brimming with spirit energy, there seemed to be signs of a breakthrough for Ni Yan's cultivation that had not shown any signs of activity for a long time.

To be able to trigger signs of a seventh grade Battle-Saint's breakthrough, it clearly showed how much spirit energy Ni Yan had ingested just now, especially the seventh grade Wandering Dragon Cow Meat Sausage which contained the highest amount of spirit energy.

Even though Ni Yan was a glutton, she was extremely meticulous about her cultivation. When she perceived that she was about to reach a breakthrough, she paid her bill and swiftly dashed out of the alleyway while pulling along Tang Yin and Lu Xiaoxiao. Within an instant, she was gone.

While Tang Yin and Lu Xiaoxiao were being dragged away by Ni Yan, they were in a state of confusion as they thought, "Master... What about our purpose for coming to the imperial city! You seemed to have forgotten again!"

Chapter 117: The Arrival In Force Of Experts From The Sects

Bu Fang was dumbfounded as he watched Ni Yan disappear in a hurry. The corners of his mouth widened into a grin. He was originally planning to discuss things with her so that she could be the appraiser of the fine wine he was going to brew... After all, Ni Yan was the only person he knew who had tasted 'Dragon's Breath' before.

"No matter what, Owner Bu's wine is already the best wine I've ever tasted," Ji Chengxue said with a smile as he raised his cup toward Bu Fang. After giving his heartfelt praise, he drained the cup in one gulp.

Xiao Yue performed the same actions as well. They had never drank 'Dragon's Breath' or whatever before, so they were not clear which wine was superior between the two. However, compared to the Bejewelled Nectar Wine that they had before, Bu Fang's Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine was the best and nothing else was comparable. The two of them believed that seeing was believing.

Bu Fang nodded his head toward them in appreciation and said, "I know that there's always someone better out there, so I won't let myself be blinded by arrogance. I'll work hard to research a new kind of fine wine. When the time comes, the two of you can come over to taste the wine. I believe it'll definitely surpass that 'Dragon's Breath' or whatever."

Bu Fang's voice was very calm, like his usual way of speaking. It was a reserved confidence that did not needlessly reveal itself.

The eyes of Ji Chengxue and Xiaoyue immediately lit up and they nodded, one after another. The two of them were naturally overjoyed that they could become Bu Fang's wine tasters. After all, with the quality of Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine as an example, any wine that was meticulously created by Bu Fang would definitely be

good.

Afterward, the two of them drank their wine as they chatted with Bu Fang. Even though Bu Fang's replies were still indifferent and terse as usual, they still had a good time since they had already gotten used to Bu Fang's mannerism.

After their wine was finished, the two stood up and paid their bill before bidding farewell with Bu Fang. With their hands held behind their backs, the two satisfiedly stepped out of the store and into the snowy world outside.

The winter wind blew past and caused the sleeves of their robes to flutter.

Bu Fang cleaned up the blue and white porcelain jars as well as the pile of plates that were cluttering Ni Yan's table. The corners of his mouth involuntarily widened into a grin. Even though that woman looked so beautiful and had a great figure as well, her appetite was frighteningly large. She was unexpectedly a genuine glutton.

"However... to be able to eat is a blessing," Bu Fang thought.

After tidying up everything, he curled up on a chair near the entrance and watched the monotonous snowy scenery outside of the store. While waiting for the customers to arrive, he pondered over how he was going to develop a fine wine that could surpass 'Dragon's Breath'.

...

A group of beautiful figures were walking on the streets of the imperial city with their hips swaying. The white snow falling from the skies seemed to have turned into pink petals and a melodious and heart-titillating sound of bells seemed to be resounding in the ears of the pedestrians.

As their fair and delicate feet trode on the street covered by pure white snow, the layer of snow sunk a little but their delicate feet

remained fair and sparkling clean. Red-string bracelets attached with bells were worn around their ankles and produced tinkling sounds as they walked.

"Clink, clink."

In this cold winter with snow covering the entire sky, these five women all had pink gauze outfits. Their facial features were beautiful, and they were seductive and charming. As they swayed their bodies from side to side, their arousing figures were vividly displayed.

The eyes of the pedestrians in the area were almost popping out from their heads. The five beauties with voluptuous figures parading themselves were a feast for the eyes of many men. There were even some with lesser composure that had two streams of blood trickling from their nostrils, triggering coquettish giggling from the five beauties.

Xiao Yue and Ji Chengxue were standing with frowns on their faces within the crowd, watching the five enchanting back figures.

"The Joyous Union Sect is here as well, and they're even prancing about in the imperial city. If father was still around, he would've already executed these demonesses." Ji Chengxue shook his head and softly sighed.

Once Emperor Changfeng passed away, these sects and factions were immediately buzzing with activity. Now, they were even brazenly swaggering around the imperial city. However, with the unstable situation within the imperial city, there was no one who had the time to deal with them.

"What is the group of women from the Joyous Union Sect doing here in the imperial city? Are they planning to participate in the fight over the throne as well?" Xiao Yue puzzledly asked with a cold expression.

Ji Chengxue chuckled while slowly moving forward and said,

"That second elder brother of mine has even accepted the Soul Sect, so what if he accepts another Joyous Union Sect? Perhaps, the White Bone Palace and Death Soul Palace would send their members here as well... He's ready to risk everything for the sake of the throne and has already stopped caring about the risk of asking a tiger for its hide."

...

King Yu's manor.

With a stern expression, King Yu was sitting high above the hall and solemnly looking down at the sect's experts with powerful auras.

With his back hunched over, Hun Qianyun, who was wrapped within a black robe, said, "King Yu, the experts from both the Joyous Union Sect and White Bone Palace have already arrived. As the Death Soul Palace had suffered huge losses because of Emperor Changfeng, they will temporarily be unable to send anyone. However, within the experts that came, the Joyous Union Sect dispatched two Battle-Emperors, three Battle-Kings, and several dozens of Battle-Maniacs. The White Bone Palace has sent two Battle-Emperors, two Battle-Kings and a hundred Battle-Maniacs. With the addition of my Soul Sect's forces, we'll definitely help King Yu ascend the throne."

King Yu indifferently listened to Hun Qianyun, but the more he listened the more alarmed he became. As expected of sects with a thousand years of legacy. Despite the constant expeditions conducted by Emperor Changfeng, they could still dispatch so many experts. There were even quite a number of sixth grade Battle-Emperors.

The thing was, Battle-Emperors were already considered the top combat force within the imperial city.

"Hmm, very good. Then, I shall rely on everyone here. Your rooms have already been prepared. I am sure that all of you must

be tired after a long journey, you may go ahead and rest," King Yu said.

Among the five erotic beauties of the Joyous Union Sect, a beautiful woman with a curvaceous figure—who was wearing a pink gauze outfit that revealed her fair and slender arms and legs—gave King Yu a coquettish glance and said, "I've often heard that King Yu is dignified and imposing. After witnessing your splendor today, this lowly woman has really been awed by King Yu's air of sovereignty."

As the woman spoke, a hint of redness appeared on her face. She appeared bashful and timid as she continued, "I wonder if it's possible for King Yu to have a chat with this lowly woman tonight."

"Kekeke! Wei Xiangsi, you flirtatious hussy. Even though you're in the presence of King Yu, you're still behaving in such a lewd manner. How could someone like King Yu be interested in you? Why don't I accompany you instead?"

A high-pitched laughter rang out as the man leading the White Bone Palace's side started laughing and his gaze greedily ran over Wei Xiangsi's shapely figure.

Wei Xiangsi's expression immediately turned cold. She gave the man from the White Bones Palace a glance and said with a sneer, "Bone King might be in the mood, but this lowly woman isn't. With your thin and weak body, this lowly woman is afraid you won't be able to get it up."

Once those words were spoken, coquettish laughter immediately burst out from the Joyous Union Sect's side. That Bone King was so angry that he was staring daggers. True energy suddenly gushed out from his body, as if a fight was about to occur from the slightest disagreement.

Hun Qianyun did not say anything. The spirit fire hidden underneath the black robe was slightly pulsating.

King Yu indifferently swept his gaze toward the two of them. The corners of his mouth curled up as he leaned on one side and used his left hand to support his head. He coldly observed the two.

Behind King Yu, a figure had appeared without anyone noticing. That figure seemed to be assimilated into the empty air. With a snap of King Yu's fingers, that figure instantly appeared in front of the two.

Two daggers that sent chill down their spines were each pressed against the neck area of Wei Xiangsi and the Bone King.

"I'll naturally reward those who aid me, but if you... mess around in front of me, there's nothing stopping me from slaughtering all of you. Remember, I am King Yu. You all are just... dregs from the sects."

As an eerily cold voice rang out, a dreadful presence and aura burst forth from King Yu's body and true energy vigorously circulated around him.

The experts from the sects standing below suddenly sucked in a breath of cold air as their pupils constricted. King Yu... had already become a sixth grade Battle-Emperor!

...

The front entrance of the Xiao manor was tightly shut. A cold winter wind blew past, swirling up the spotlessly white snowflakes.

A figure wearing a bamboo hat with a black veil was quietly standing from a distance, calmly looking at the Xiao manor with eyes filled with nostalgia.

"What? Are you homesick?" Ji Chengxue's mild voice rang out from behind him as he stood next to Xiao Yue.

With a hoarse voice, Xiao Yue replied, "Mother said before, she once asked father, if the emperor were to pass away one day, which prince would he support."

Ji Chengxue's pupils slightly moved as he asked, "Oh? And, the result was?"

Xiao Yue did not immediately reply him, but started to chuckle instead. He took off his bamboo hat and his bright eyes looked straight at Ji Chengxue as he said, "The result was... mother is still sleeping, while I am standing in front of you."

Chapter 118: Amethyst Heart Orchid And Sky Spirit Abalone

On Xiao Yue's handsome face, those pitch-black pupils resembled twinkling stars in the night. They were blooming with dazzling splendor while staring straight at Ji Chengxue.

Ji Chengxue was stunned when he heard Xiao Yue's words. His dashing eyebrows furrowed together and almost touched each other as they continued to approach. He sucked in a deep breath of cold air and then exhaled a white cloud of hot breath, dispersing the falling snowflakes.

"What's the meaning of your words?" Ji Chengxue asked with a tone that was slightly colder than before.

He had always been unable to understand why Xiao Yue would harm his own mother, Ji Ru'Er. Even though Xiao Yue was deeply immersed in the art of the sword before the incident occurred, he did not display any signs of going too far...

The incident three years ago when Xiao Yue stabbed his mother and shattered her heart with a sword strike was even more bizarre and difficult to understand than Xiao Yue's desertion and later admission into the Void Sword Pavilion.

There was a time when Ji Chengxue was enraged because Ji Ru'Er was his biological sister and his closest relative within the imperial palace. She was someone he had always depended on, a haven where he could receive comfort whenever he suffered a grievance.

During that time, when Ji Ru'Er was getting married, he even held a sword against Xiao Meng's chest and had him swear an oath. Even though this was an action that appeared childish, it clearly showed the importance of his elder sister in his heart.

After his mother passed away, Ji Ru'Er became Ji Chengxue's

most important loved one.

Three years ago, when Ji Chengxue found out that Ji Ru'Er had fallen into a coma after Xiao Yue struck her down, he chased after Xiao Yue with a sword throughout the night with the intention of killing him. Even though he did not succeed in the end, this was a clear display of his feelings for his elder sister.

On the last expedition against the sects outside of the border, Xiao Yue was the one who took the initiative to pay Ji Chengxue a visit. During a dangerous moment, he rescued Ji Chengxue and saved his life.

This was the reason why Ji Chengxue was puzzled and needed Xiao Yue's explanation.

"My dear uncle, you might not believe my explanation. However, what if I told you that mother did everything for your sake as well as the sake of the Xiao family?" Xiao Yue let out a soft sigh. His eyes slightly lowered and revealed a faint sadness.

"Father's cultivation level is unrivalled. A seventh grade Battle-Saint is already unequalled within the imperial city. If he really wanted to kill me, I wouldn't be able to resist at all... However, I am still alive and well. Do you know why?" Xiao Yue said. At that time, when he fought with Xiao Meng from Fang Fang's Little Store to the imperial city. There were several opportunities for Xiao Meng to directly slay him, but he still stayed his hand in the end.

Xiao Yue understood that his profoundly powerful father must have discovered something.

Ji Chengxue's eyes slightly narrowed as he beckoned Xiao Yue to continue. Perhaps, this might be the moment his doubts would be completely dispelled.

However, Xiao Yue did not say much and did not give Ji Chengxue any detailed explanations either. He turned his head

toward Ji Chengxue and said, "Mother had always hoped that father would support you. After His Majesty passed away, she hoped you would become the next emperor."

"Unfortunately, father refused. He refused to support any prince because he only wanted to serve the true emperor. Mother said father was being too honest... that he might cause a calamity to befall the Xiao family."

Ji Chengxue's eyes narrowed as he meaningfully looked at Xiao Yue and discovered the latter's expression remained the same.

"What does all these have to do with you stabbing your mother's heart? After saying all of this, what are you trying to tell me?" Ji Chengxue's gaze was sharp as a sword as he pressed Xiao Yue to continue.

Xiao Yue turned his head and said, "She just wanted to fulfill you as well as protect the Xiao family... You should understand the meaning of [having meritorious deeds that eclipse one's master](#). If the reigning emperor was still Emperor Changfeng who inspired awe throughout the empire, the Xiao family would naturally be safe. However, once Emperor Changfeng has passed on, the new emperor would never let leave Xiao family be. Whether it's the crown prince or King Yu, the Xiao family would be a thorn in their side once they ascended the throne. You're the only one who might refrain from destroying the Xiao family because of mother's sake."

"As expected of my elder sister, she has always been exceptionally intelligent. She thoroughly understood the situation. So, she made you shatter her heart in order to understand the way of the sword, and then forced you to rebel against the empire and join the Void Sword Pavilion? What's her objective?" Ji Chengxue asked.

"She wanted me to support you as a representative of the Xiao family," Xiao Yue serenely said. His state of mind was like a well of water without a single ripple.

"Ridiculous... What would a woman like her know! Does she

think that I need her to sacrifice herself? How dare she make such a decision without first discussing things with me! Did she never think about how upsetting her current situation would be for me? And you, why are you causing trouble with her?"

For the first time, Ji Chengxue lost his refined attitude and became somewhat hysterical. His eyes were red as he angrily scolded Xiao Yue while pointing at him, one sentence at a time. After a long while, he finally became tired.

"Now that father has passed away from his illness, you've come to endorse me as the next emperor? I can't compare against my elder brothers and you can't represent the entire Xiao family either... How am I supposed to compete with them? What she did, only made herself suffer." Ji Chengxue let out a sigh.

He always thought Xiao Yue's ambition caused Ji Ru'Er's coma. He had never anticipated that everything was part of his own elder sister's plan for him to become the next emperor.

As he recalled his childhood and his elder sister's gentle gaze whenever he suffered a grievance, Ji Chengxue's desire to compete against his elder brothers over the throne became even stronger. He was not doing it for any other reason, but for the sake of his elder sister's good intentions.

...

The winter night arrived quickly, and the snow had stopped. In the starry night sky, two crescent moons were calling out to each other and releasing a chilly radiance.

The store's opening hours had ended and Bu Fang was starting to put the door boards back in place. Blacky, who was lying at the entrance, widely yawned and mumbled to itself for a moment before going back to sleep.

Giving Blacky a glance, Bu Fang broke into a grin. This lazy dog was still as lazy as ever.

Suddenly, a series of footsteps came from the alleyway and a figure gradually appeared from the darkness.

Bu Fang puzzledly looked at the somewhat familiar figure. He wondered why this person would come to the store at such a time.

"Owner Bu, are you closing up for today?" Xiao Yue hoarsely asked while faintly smiling at Bu Fang.

Bu Fang expressionlessly gave him a glance before he replied, "The business hours are over, so I am naturally closing up."

Xiao Yue nodded. Suddenly, with a flash of light, a sandalwood box appeared in his hand. The exterior of the box was gorgeously decorated and a rich medicinal fragrance was wafting out from within.

Xiao Yue solemnly looked at Bu Fang and gravely said, "Owner Bu, I... have a humble request. The effect of your elixir cuisine, the Sage Herb Phoenix Chicken Soup, was astonishing. Are you capable of cooking other types of elixir cuisine as well?"

"As long as the ingredients are provided, I can," Bu Fang confidently replied before he curiously looked at Xiao Yue. Could he be requesting him to cook the elixir cuisine?

"This is the sixth grade spirit herb Amethyst Heart Orchid as well as the fifth grade sea spirit beast Sky Spirit Abalone. I hope Owner Bu can use them to cook an elixir cuisine... I am willing to pay a heavy sum as remuneration," Xiao Yue earnestly said as he looked at Bu Fang with expectation.

Bu Fang raised his eyebrows as he glanced at the abalone that was the size of two palms and sucked in a breath of cold air. He did not anticipate that Xiao Yue would be able to obtain such ingredients that were truly hard to come by.

Bu Fang seemed to be able to feel Xiao Yue's sincere gaze. Even though he did not know what Xiao Yue was planning to do with the elixir cuisine, he could tell from the ingredients that it was

meant for saving someone.

Bu Fang did not refuse. He nodded as he accepted the ingredients. After storing them into the system's storage space, he said, "Since you only brought a single portion of ingredients, I can't guarantee success. If I fail... I won't collect remuneration."

Xiao Yue was startled for a moment and then nodded. He understood that cooking an elixir cuisine was very difficult, so he did not insist on a guarantee. However, the ingredients were truly difficult to find, so he could only prepare a single portion.

"Then I shall thank Owner Bu in advance. If you succeed, when should I come to collect the elixir cuisine?" Xiao Yue asked.

Since Bu Fang had already collected the ingredients, he did not say much. After placing the last door board in place, his voice came from behind the door board, "If there are no accidents, come back in three days."

Xiao Yue nodded, turned around and left.

There was only three days left until the emperor's funeral...

having meritorious deeds that eclipse one's master (功高盖主) - When a subordinate has so many achievements that their superior are worried about their own position.

Chapter 119: An Abalone With Its Own Magic Array

After Bu Fang placed the door boards back in place, he went back into the kitchen. He originally wanted to practice his cooking, but he did not anticipate that Xiao Yue would actually present such a difficult problem to him when the store was closing.

Even though Bu Fang had only cooked a single type of elixir cuisine—the Sage Herb Phoenix Chicken Soup—before, he was very familiar with the principle behind the cooking process. The main point was the test of the chef's familiarity of the true energy culinary method, since more attention needed to be paid on the control over true energy when cooking elixir cuisines than ordinary cooking.

"System, could you give me an explanation on the origins and effects of these two ingredients?" Bu Fang directly asked the system without feeling abashed. For him, the system was an encyclopedia that basically contained information on all ingredients.

The system was silent for a moment before giving Bu Fang a reply.

"Amethyst Heart Orchid: a sixth grade spirit herb that grows on amethyst ore veins. Its maturity period is one hundred years and only three Amethyst Heart Orchid will grow on a single amethyst ore vein. Every single herb has a reddish purple color and its surface is covered with vein patterns that resemble burn marks. The herb is also filled with a rich amount of spirit energy and amethyst fire spirit energy. It is an extremely excellent medicine for treating patients with mental trauma."

"Deep Sea Sky Spirit Abalone: a fifth grade sea spirit beast that can be found at the bottom of the deep sea. It has underwent purification by the spirit energy at the bottom of the sea. Its shell

possesses a naturally formed spirit array and during the cooking process, this spirit array will be able to unendingly provide water spirit energy. It has the medicinal effect of replenishing life force and alleviating mental traumas."

The system earnestly provided Bu Fang with detailed information on the two ingredients. Bu Fang took a deep breath after reading through the information. From the introduction given, he could tell how valuable these two ingredients were. Their preciousness were at least a grade higher than the Heavenly Sage Herb and Phoenix Blood Chicken.

Bu Fang suddenly felt a sense of pressure because the more valuable the ingredients, the higher the difficulty of cooking the elixir cuisine.

Furthermore, Bu Fang realized that both of the ingredients shared a common trait, possessing the effectiveness of treating mental traumas. Without a question, Xiao Yue was planning to use this elixir cuisine to treat someone suffering from a mental trauma.

Mental traumas were not easy to resolve. The fact that Xiao Yue would entrust Bu Fang to cook this elixir cuisine meant that Bu Fang might be the only person in the imperial city that could prepare a high grade elixir cuisine and also showed Xiao Yue's trust toward him.

Xiao Yue believed that Bu Fang was someone who adhered to his principles. He could tell it from the various rules that existed in the store. Furthermore, he was very reassured about the store's security.

"System, is it possible for these two ingredients to be provided for my practice?" Bu Fang quietly asked.

"It's possible. If the host wishes to use an ingredient, you can purchase them from the system." The system seriously replied, "Amethyst Heart Orchid: a thousand crystals. Sky Spirit Abalone: a

thousand crystals."

Bu Fang's face immediately darkened. For the first time, he realized the system was so despicable... For the sake of supporting his grand undertaking into becoming the God of Cooking, should the system not provide these practice ingredients for free?

Bu Fang sucked in a breath of cold air and asked, "System... Can't you make it cheaper?"

"No. However, in order to increase the chances of success in cooking the elixir cuisine, the system suggests the host purchases other ingredients that are similar, as a replacement for your practice. Replacement ingredients: third grade spirit herb Fire Spirit Orchid for fifty crystals, third grade sea spirit beast Black Spirit Abalone for a hundred crystals."

Bu Fang was stunned for a moment. He was left speechless by the system's flawless logic.

"Then, give me three portions of the replacement ingredients." In order to ensure the success of the elixir cuisine, Bu Fang chose to purchase the ingredients from the system in the end. The money used to pay for the purchase was directly deducted from his sales earning.

This made Bu Fang's heart ache. Every single crystal spent came from his cultivation level...

From within the cupboard where three portions of ingredients had already appeared, Bu Fang took out a single portion.

The Black Spirit Abalone was naturally not as good as the Sky Spirit Abalone and the amount of spirit energy was not as abundant either. However, he put up with it since it was only a replacement for his practice.

After washing the Black Spirit Abalone, Bu Fang carefully observed its shell and discovered faint lines on its surface that formed an unusual magic array. This array was slowly circulating

and gathering a rich amount of spirit energy.

Putting it plainly, the Black Spirit Abalone was just like an ordinary abalone. It was not as big as the Sky Spirit Abalone and was around the size of a large abalone in his previous world.

The best method to cook an elixir cuisine was simmering. After using an abalone to make soup, the soup itself contained the most medicinal value. Especially after adding spirit herbs, the value of the soup would rise even further and it could even be said to be the essence of the elixir cuisine.

Taking out a claypot, Bu Fang placed the Black Spirit Abalone inside and then poured the spring water provided by the system into the claypot. The refreshingly sweet spring water was filled with spirit energy.

After Bu Fang exchanged some other spirit herbs from the system, he sliced them up and carefully placed them into the claypot. The arrangement of these spirit herbs was carefully decided. If their positions were different, the taste and medicinal effects of the elixir cuisine would be affected.

After making some more adjustments to the arrangement of the ingredients, Bu Fang covered the claypot with the lid and began to simmer it. This was a process that must not be rushed.

Once steam started emerging from the claypot, Bu Fang removed the lid and a cloud of steam billowed out. Using the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife, he made an incision on the Fire Spirit Orchid and let the highly concentrated spirit juice drip into the claypot. A rich fragrance immediately started wafting out from within.

During this phase, Bu Fang needed to infuse his true energy to control the spirit juice so that it would continuously permeate into the Black Spirit Abalone...

The second time the lid was removed, Bu Fang placed the Fire Spirit Orchid into the claypot and replaced the lid once more to let

it simmer... After another half an hour, the elixir cuisine was completed.

...

Inside a luxurious inn within the imperial city.

An enchanting and voluptuous figure was sitting cross-legged on top of a large bed. Ni Yan's jet black hair spilled down her back like a waterfall. Her eyes were tightly shut while her hands formed a hand seal. True energy was continuously circulating outside of her body.

After eating so much delicious food at Bu Fang's store, the abundant true energy within her body allowed Ni Yan to attempt advancing toward the next stage. Even though her current cultivation level was at the early phase of seventh grade Battle-Saint, she might be able to directly reach the later phase with this breakthrough. Even though she would not become an eighth grade, this was already considered very good.

After all, after reaching the level of Battle-Saint, every single improvement was a dramatic change in power.

Buzz.

As a sound wave spread out, mysterious symbols seemed to be circulating within Ni Yan's eyes and her crystal clear skin was overflowing with bright lights. At that moment, she was so beautiful that it was suffocating, like a celestial maiden whose beauty was unparalleled.

Suddenly, Ni Yan let out a long shout. She felt as if she had just pushed open a tightly shut door. Although only a small crack in the door was opened, a surging wave of true energy instantly flowed through her body and she could not help but cry out.

Underneath the peaceful and flourishing outward appearance of the imperial city, an earthshaking event occurred.

The long shout was accompanied with a pillar of light extending

into the sky that was extremely conspicuous within the dark night.

Within the Xiao manor, Xiao Meng suddenly opened his eyes and looked toward the direction of the pillar of light that extended into the sky. With a sudden change in expression, his body moved and he exited the room. While stepping on thin air, he started heading toward the location of the pillar of light.

"A seventh grade Battle-Saint appearing within the imperial city at such a moment? I wonder if this is an enemy or an ally."

...

Minister of the Left's manor.

Wearing an overcoat, Zhao Musheng indifferently looked at the pillar of light. As he narrowed his eyes, a golden light seemed to be slightly circulating in the depth of his eyes.

"This is the aura of someone from Celestial Arcanum Sect... Could it be that even the Celestial Arcanum Sect is intending to participate this time?" he muttered to himself before smiling. With slow strides, his entire body gracefully floated into the air as he leisurely headed toward the direction of that conspicuous location.

At that moment, it was not just the Minister of the Left and Xiao Meng, but all of the factions within the imperial city were startled by it. Only someone with at least the cultivation level of a seventh grade Battle-Saint could cause a phenomenon where true energy extended toward the sky... With a new Battle-Saint appearing within the imperial city at such a sensitive period, anyone would be alarmed.

If either the crown prince or King Yu could obtain the support of this Battle-Saint, their faction would be able to crush their opposition.

Chapter 120: Get Lost All Of You, Don't Come And Bother Me

Outside a room in a luxurious inn within the imperial city.

Tang Yin was solemnly standing at the doorway with his arms crossed and a longsword in his embrace. His expression was extremely grim as he looked into the distance. Waves of true energy were circulating outside his body, appearing like sparkling lights in the darkness.

Behind him, the pillar of light that extended into the sky was emanating surging waves of energy. He knew that his gluttonous master was advancing to the next level. However, this was giving Tang Yin a headache as he understood the current situation within the imperial city well enough. In this sort of situation, only his master would dare to advance to the next level in such an eye-catching manner.

How was this any different from telling others that you were there to cause trouble?

Within the current imperial city, what would the appearance of a seventh grade Battle-Saint mean? The crown prince and King Yu would be completely green with envy. After all, experts were equivalent to important resources that could ensure their ascension to the throne.

As expected, Tang Yin spotted a tall and sturdy figure heading in their direction while walking in the air. He softly exhaled as he focused his attention on the figure.

"The Light Wind Empire's guardian, seventh grade Battle-Saint... Xiao Meng?" Tang Yin muttered as he watched the approaching Xiao Meng. This was his first meeting with this legendary figure as well.

Nearby, his junior sister, Lu Xiaoxiao, had unexpectedly appeared

as well and timidly stood behind Tang Yin. Her surprising action made his heart feel rather warm.

"Might I ask who you are, and what is your purpose for coming to the imperial city?"

Before even arriving, Xiao Meng's imposing voice had already reached them as if an intimidating aura had landed on Tang Yin, causing his body to slightly tremble.

"We're members of the Celestial Arcanum Sect. Please be assured that our master and the two of us have come without any ill intentions," Tang Yin said with a fist and palm salute to Xiao Meng, while behaving neither servile nor haughty.

Holding his hands behind his back, Xiao Meng slowly approached step by step while his sleeves flapped behind him. With a solemn expression, he soon landed in front of Tang Yin.

"The Celestial Arcanum Sect? Right after His Majesty passed away, the Celestial Arcanum Sect dispatches a seventh grade Battle-Saint into the Light Wind Empire. And you're telling me that you have no ill intentions? Do you really expect me to believe you?" Xiao Meng mildly said as the corners of his mouth curled up, seemingly sneering at Tang Yin.

Tang Yin was really put in a difficult position. They really did not have any ill intentions. Their only purpose for coming to the imperial city was to obtain the Phoenix Blood Herb from Bu Fang's hands... Now that things had reached this stage, Tang Yin was helpless as well.

Gluttony was to blame. Tang Yin did not know whether to laugh or cry. If that gluttonous master of his did not eat every single dish in Bu Fang's store, everything would be alright.

While enduring Xiao Meng's deliberate release of his aura, Tang Yin could only once again emphasize their lack of ill intentions.

The pillar of light within the room was rapidly shrinking.

Evidently, the person inside had completed their breakthrough and was concealing their aura. Soon, the pillar of light completely disappeared...

Dadada.

The sound of footsteps could be heard. Zhao Musheng slowly approached with his eyes squinting and a smile on his face.

"General Xiao, go easy on them. They're our guests after all. It's rare for experts from the Celestial Arcanum Sect to appear within the imperial city. As the host, we should show proper etiquette."

Zhao Musheng's voice was very gentle, revealing his slyness at handling matters. His jovial attitude made anyone else unable to be angry at him.

However, Xiao Meng was furious the moment he saw Zhao Musheng's face. He thought, "This wily old fox, he's unexpectedly a seventh grade Battle-Saint. Everyone was fooled by him for so long... No wonder why His Majesty would always be on guard against Zhao Musheng when he was still alive. The truth was he already realized this wily old fox was not simple."

He was a seventh grade Battle-Saint and yet he hid his cultivation level for so many years. What was his identity? What was his objective? Xiao Meng knew nothing at all.

Therefore, Xiao Meng was not happy to see Zhao Musheng in the slightest.

The pressure Tang Yin was feeling increased even further. An empire's general and Minister of the Left were both distinguished people. The aura that they were subconsciously releasing made his heart tremble.

Just as Tang Yin felt the pressure on him increase even further, the door to the room behind him suddenly opened. A wave of breeze-like true energy swept past, brushing away the pressure on Tang Yin like melting snow.

A figure wrapped within a long robe walked out from the room.

"Master," Tang Yin and Lu Xiaoxiao hurriedly shouted.

Xiao Meng and Zhao Musheng both looked toward the direction of the door as well, and saw a woman wearing a veil.

Zhao Musheng's eyes constricted. He immediately recognized the identity of this woman at a glance and was slightly surprised... The third elder of the Celestial Arcanum Sect was an extremely distinguished identity. What was her objective for coming to the imperial city?

Xiao Meng narrowed his eyes at the woman before him. The wave of true energy that surged out had not dissipated yet and he could feel a trace of danger. This woman... was not simple.

"Zhao Musheng, it's been a while... The middle-aged man from back then has now become an elderly man," Ni Yan said with a faint smile.

The corners of Zhao Musheng's mouth curled up as he sighed with feeling. "The brat from back then has grown up into a distinguished personage. The Celestial Arcanum Sect is not simple indeed."

"What purpose does your excellency have for entering our imperial city?" Xiao Meng said with a frown. From the looks of it, the other party seemed to be rather familiar with Zhao Musheng. Could Zhao Musheng be a member of the Celestial Arcanum Sect as well?

Ni Yan's devastatingly beautiful face turned toward Xiao Meng and the smile on her face disappeared. She lifted up her hand and then pointed toward Zhao Musheng. She said, "Whatever he's doing within the imperial city, we're here... to do the same thing."

The moment Zhao Musheng heard those words, he almost vomited a mouthful of blood. After so many years, this brat was still as impish as ever. With a single sentence, he was directly

dragged down with her.

Nearby, Tang Yin and Lu Xiaoxiao were both dumbfounded. What was their master saying? Weren't their objectives for entering the imperial city purely to obtain the Phoenix Blood Herb? When did they ever have any other objectives?

"What nonsense are you talking about, this old man has been staying in the imperial city for all these years. Climbing up the ranks until the position of Minister of the Left was all for the sake of serving the empire." Zhao Musheng said with a chuckle, indicating that his purpose for staying within the imperial city was pure.

Xiao Meng let out a chuckle. Who would believe Zhao Musheng's nonsense.

"What? Old man? Am I wrong? Why don't the two of us have a fight, and whoever wins will be the one speaking the truth? How about that?" Ni Yan said with a chortle as her large eyes stared at Zhao Musheng.

Zhao Musheng pursed his lips and shook his head. He immediately turned around and began to leave without staying for too long.

"These old bones of mine wouldn't be able to take the torment."

Xiao Meng meaningfully gave Ni Yan a glance, but Ni Yan was naturally not afraid. Even though Xiao Meng was the guardian of the Light Wind Empire, she was completely unafraid. After all, Ni Yan had just reached a breakthrough and her confidence was still quite high.

Xiao Meng left as well. He did not bother Ni Yan too much.

After Xiao Meng left, an imperiousness gradually appeared in Ni Yan's large eyes. She scanned the surroundings and then her sweet-sounding voice sounded out, spreading into the surroundings of the inn.

"All of the Tom, Dick, and Harry in the surroundings, get lost! Don't come and bother me, I don't want to see anyone!"

The faces of King Yu and the crown prince who were on their way immediately turned black... The temper of this female Battle-Saint seemed a little violent.

...

Bu Fang, who had climbed into bed and was about to fall asleep, was suddenly woken up by a feminine shout. He drowsily rubbed his eyes. For some reason, he found the voice strangely familiar. However, after thinking for a while, he could not point out the reason for the familiarity and went back to sleep. He was extremely tired after preparing an elixir cuisine.

Without any question, his first try of preparing the elixir cuisine failed. It failed not because it was not edible, but because it failed to meet Bu Fang's expectations. It did not completely bring out the medicinal effects of the elixir cuisine and he also made some mistakes while infusing his true energy.

Xiao Yue had only provided a single portion of ingredients, so no mistakes must be made. Therefore, Bu Fang had to review that day's mistake in order to obtain success tomorrow.

When the sun rose up on the following day, the imperial city began its busy day.

Within the imperial palace, many eunuchs and court ladies were busily making preparations inside of the majestic Main Hall. There were only two more days before the emperor's funeral and there were still things that needed to be prepared. The atmosphere within the palace was somewhat sorrowful.

Outside of the Gate of Heavenly Mystery, Ji Chengxue, dressed in a white robe, was slowly walking toward the Main Hall. His eyes were filled with complicated emotions.

Chapter 121: The Smelly Boss Who Prefers New Over Old?

Rustling white snow that was light like goosefeather drifted down from the sky, covering the opulent imperial palace with a layer of silvery coat and adding a slight eeriness to the majesty of the Main Hall.

Ji Chengxue was wearing a white robe as he slowly headed toward the Main Hall. His hair was bound using only a string and he was wearing very little accessories.

The snow that accumulated on the path toward the Main Hall was already cleared away by the imperial palace's eunuchs, making the path easy to walk on. However, the further Ji Chengxue walked, the more he felt an oppressive feeling.

After passing through the Gate of Heavenly Mystery, the Main Hall was right before his eyes. He climbed a set of stone stairs and reached the entrance of the Main Hall. The eunuchs and court ladies that were nervously making preparations in the area hurriedly greeted him.

Ji Chengxue gently nodded and indicated them to continue with their work. With his hands held behind his back, he stepped into the Main Hall, the place where his father often stayed while he was still alive.

In the current Main Hall, the figure filled with vigor and determination from back then had already disappeared. Only an empty hall, seemingly left with helplessness and lament, remained.

Lian Fu slowly walked out from the back of the Main Hall. He seemed somewhat tired and faint dark circles had appeared around his eyes. His head of hair became eye-catching after turning white.

"Lian Gonggong," Ji Chengxue did not dare to look down on this

chief of eunuchs. After all, he was a seventh grade Battle-Saint as well as his father's trusted aide.

"Your Highness, what is your purpose for coming here?" Lian Fu said as he lightly swung his horsetail whisk. His high-pitched voice revealed a hint of fatigue and sorrow still lingered on his face.

Lian Fu and the emperor had a close relationship and the two of them apparently grew up together. Now that Emperor Changfeng had passed on, there was no one who was more grief-stricken than Lian Fu.

Ji Chengxue took a deep breath and bowed toward Lian Fu as he said, "Lian Gonggong, I would like to see my father..."

Lian Fu dispiritedly pinched his thumb and middle finger together as he gave Ji Chengxue a glance and immediately refused. "No, His Majesty once gave a command that no one is to see his remains before the funeral."

"As a son, can't I see my father for one last time?" Ji Chengxue asked with a frown.

"Your Highness, please turn back. You should know that this humble servant would never disobey His Majesty's decree, even if His Majesty has already passed away."

When Ji Chengxue saw Lian Fu's resolute attitude, he sighed internally and did not continue pestering him. He turned around and left the Main Hall.

Lian Fu's gaze was brooding as he watched Ji Chengxue's disappearing back figure.

...

Bang bang bang!

The sound of someone banging on the door interrupted Bu Fang, who was practicing the Big Dipper Carving Technique. He expressionlessly turned his head and glanced toward the door

board that was shaking from the knocking.

Who in the world would be banging on the door at such an early hour?

Bu Fang washed his fair and slender hands and then wiped off the water droplets on them, before walking to the entrance and removing the door board.

Reflected in his eyes was a devastatingly beautiful face covered with a veil. The eyes on that face were excitedly staring at him.

"Owner Bu, you finally opened the door! Hurry up and let me in!" Ni Yan impatiently said.

However, Bu Fang did not move. Using his body to block the way, he expressionlessly looked at her and said, "It's not opening hours yet. Why are you here at such an early hour?"

Ni Yan was stunned for a moment. She immediately lifted up the ingredients in her hand toward Bu Fang and said, "I benefited a lot from eating your dishes yesterday, so I have a sudden itch to demonstrate my skills for you to have a look."

Ni Yan had a lot of confidence in her culinary skills. Everyone within the Celestial Arcanum Sect was subdued by the delicious dishes that she cooked.

Bu Fang pursed his lips as he thought, "There must be something wrong with this woman... Coming here at such an early hour and announcing that she wants to cook for me, is she trying to borrow my kitchen?"

"I don't want to look, and the kitchen isn't for loan," Bu Fang indifferently said.

Ni Yan was suddenly at a loss for words. She was indeed planning to borrow his kitchen. Without a kitchen, how was she going to cook?

Seeing that Bu Fang was about to place the door board back in

place, Ni Yan immediately became anxious. True energy gushed out from her body as she held onto the door board and stopped Bu Fang.

"Wait a moment!" Ni Yan shouted.

"Are you trying to cause trouble?" Bu Fang indifferently asked while feeling the surging wave of true energy coming from Ni Yan's body. Thereafter, a beam of red light appeared next to him as Whitey's plump body emerged.

"Troublemakers will be stripped as an example to others," Whitey mechanically said as its eyes flashed.

"Sheesh... You're such an insensitive person. I am sincerely planning to cook for you, yet you are trying to drive me away! How could you treat a beauty in such a manner!" Ni Yan's large eyes were watery, as if she was about to burst into tears.

Ni Yan could feel a terrifying sense of danger from Whitey. She thought, "As expected of someone who could obtain the Phoenix Blood Herb..."

"What's your objective? Don't beat around the bush," Bu said with a frown as he gave Ni Yan a glance.

Once those words were spoken, the tears in Ni Yan's eyes instantly disappeared and she returned to her previous transcendent appearance.

"I want to learn your technique that preserves the spirit energy within the meat of spirit beasts," Ni Yan directly said.

Bu Fang calmly looked straight at Ni Yan, and not wanting to be outdone, Ni Yan stared back at him in return. Both of their gazes collided in the air without any restraints.

"Bang!!"

Bu Fang admitted defeat in the end. This woman's gaze was too sharp, so Bu Fang chose to put the door board back in place.

"I am not going to teach you."

After the door board was placed back in place, Bu Fang's indifferent voice drifted out and travelled into Ni Yan's ears, causing her to space out at the entrance.

...

After a long while, Bu Fang finally finished his morning practice. While carrying the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs that was just prepared, he removed the door board.

Wrapped in a long robe, Ni Yan was squatting at the entrance. When she saw Bu Fang, she immediately stood up in excitement.

Bu Fang was feeling a slight headache as he thought, "Why is this woman still around..."

"Blacky, it's time to eat," Bu Fang softly said, ignoring the woman. He placed the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs in front of Blacky and stroked its soft and warm fur before going back into the store.

The opening hours officially began.

"Smelly boss, I am back!"

The sound of running footsteps came from the alleyway and Ouyang Xiaoyi's voice came from afar, soon reaching Bu Fang's ears.

Bu Fang was just placing the dishes in front of Fatty Jin when he looked up in surprise and saw Ouyang Xiaoyi, who had been missing for the past few days, skipping into the store.

From the ecstatic expression on her face, she looked like she was just released... Even though Ouyang Xiaoyi was indeed just released.

The moment Ouyang Xiaoyi stepped into the store, she saw a veil-wearing woman in a loose robe following the smelly boss around. Her eyes immediately widened as she puzzledly asked, "Who are you!"

"Has the smelly boss already found a new waitress? Has he already gotten tired of me?" Ouyang Xiaoyi thought.

"And who's this little brat?" Ni Yan said with a snort after giving Ouyang Xiaoyi a glance and continued to follow Bu Fang around.

Bu Fang walked into the kitchen. Ni Yan wanted to go in as well, but Whitey mercilessly blocked her from entering.

If Ni Yan had not felt that the oppressive feeling that this lump of steel was giving her was too strong, she would have already tore it apart...

Ouyang Xiaoyi pursed her lips. Her heart hurt so much that she could not breathe. The smelly boss who prefers new over old actually found a new waitress. She suddenly felt as if the entire world had forsaken her.

"Xiaoyi, serve the dish."

Just when tears welled up in Ouyang Xiaoyi's eyes and was about to flow out like a dam opening its floodgates, Bu Fang's indifferent voice drifted out from the kitchen.

Ouyang Xiaoyi was stunned for a moment. She sniffed and her face instantly brightened as she eagerly ran toward the window. The smelly boss did not change waitresses!

After passing the dish to Ouyang Xiaoyi who was cheerful for some reason, Bu Fang looked toward Ni Yan and asked with a frown, "Aren't you tired of following me around?"

"If you teach me the technique to control the spirit energy within the meat of spirit beasts, I won't bother you anymore," Ni Yan unreasonably said with a snort.

After thinking for a moment, Bu Fang seriously said, "Then, go and cook a dish that you're most confident in. If you can satisfy me, I'll teach you. Otherwise, don't bother me."

Chapter 122: This Elder Sister Is So Beautiful, Why Don't You Spare Me A Few More Glances?

Bu Fang's words immediately caused Ni Yan's eyes to light up and almost curve into crescent moons. She excitedly said, "You better keep your promise! Lend me your kitchen first!"

Without a question, her request to borrow the kitchen was mercilessly rejected by Bu Fang once more.

"Go and borrow the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant's kitchen. My kitchen is not available for outsiders' use," Bu Fang said, while feeling impressed with his own wit.

Ni Yan suspiciously gave Bu Fang a glance and snorted before leaving. Since Bu Fang was not going to lend her the kitchen, she could only use the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant's kitchen. This was her only choice. As for whether the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant was willing... Did they have any other choice?

Only after seeing that Ni Yan had left, Bu Fang let out a sigh of relief. This woman had been following him around like one's shadow since early in the morning and had already severely affected his business.

The alleyway was still filled with whirling snow and whistling cold wind while the interior of the store was particularly warm and cozy.

Ji Chengxue, wearing a white woolen coat, exhaled a cloud of breath as he entered the alleyway. As he stepped into the store, the warm atmosphere inside made him feel somewhat joyful. He took off his thick and heavy woolen overcoat and greeted Bu Fang before turning his gaze toward the menu behind him. During the period when he was on an expedition against the sects, there should be quite a number of new dishes. He said, "Owner Bu, let's

see what new dishes you have here."

"Owner Bu, I'll have a serving of Red Braised Meat as well as a jar of Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine."

"Oh my, Xiaoyi. It's been a while. You've grown taller and become even prettier," Ji Chengxue said with a chuckle as he patted Ouyang Xiaoyi's head.

Bu Fang nodded. As he headed for the kitchen, he said, "Wait a moment."

A hint of a smile appeared on Ji Chengxue's face as he sniffed the fragrance wafting within the store. Only when he was inside the store he could truly relax. Within this place, he did not need to think about anything, to a point where he did not even need to worry about his safety. In a way, he was somewhat infatuated with the store's atmosphere.

While Ji Chengxue was waiting for Bu Fang to finish cooking the Red Braised Meat, a burst of coquettish laughter came from the alleyway. That laughter was filled with seduction and there was even the sound of bells ringing.

"Elder sister, don't you think this is the store? That incomprehensible black-hearted store from the rumors?" a feminine voice languidly asked in puzzlement.

"It's opened within a remote alleyway. According to the descriptions given by that old man, Hun Qianyun, this should be the place. Let's go, sisters. Let's see what sort of magic this little restaurant has that even Hun Qianyun had to suffer losses."

Thereafter, a burst of merry laughter sounded out, accompanied with the sound of bells ringing as several enchanting and seductive figures stepped into the store.

As her delicate feet stepped into the warm and cozy interior of the store, Wei Xiangsi's red phoenix eyes slightly widened. The outside was a world of ice and snow, yet the interior of the store

was like blooming spring. She was truly surprised by the sudden change in environment.

Furthermore, the fragrance wafting within the store was causing Wei Xiangsi to involuntarily lapse into a euphoric state as well. It was truly aromatic.

"Xiaoyi, serve the dish," Bu Fang called out as he placed the Red Braised Meat at the window. Xiaoyi eagerly ran over and brought the Red Braised Meat to Ji Chengxue's table.

Bu Fang walked out of the kitchen with a jar of Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine in his hands and placed it in front of Ji Chengxue.

"Please enjoy your meal," Bu Fang said. As he finished speaking, his gaze landed on the three figures that had just stepped into the store.

These three women were wearing revealing outfits, and they were all extremely beautiful and seductive, completely expressing a woman's charm.

"Oh my, the owner is a handsome-looking young man. Come over here, this elder sister wants to make an order." As Wei Xiangsi's gaze landed on Bu Fang, she suddenly covered her mouth and let out a chuckle.

Ji Chengxue sneered as he shook his head and turned his attention back to the Red Braised Meat. These woman from the Joyous Union Sect would be fine if they were here to eat, but if they were here to cause trouble... Things would be interesting.

When Ji Chengxue looked at the overpoweringly fragrant Red Braised Meat with a rosy luster, he could not help but swallow his saliva. He picked up his chopsticks and swiftly popped a piece of meat into his mouth.

The meaty flavor was like a bomb that exploded within his mouth, instantly enveloping his taste buds and causing him to completely enter an euphoric state.

"If you want to order something, look at the menu behind you," Bu Fang expressionlessly said as he gave the three women with revealing outfits a glance before heading toward the kitchen.

Wei Xiangsi did not anticipate that Bu Fang would actually ignore her and was slightly infuriated by this.

"This elder sister is so beautiful, why don't you spare me a few more glances?"

Cling, cling, cling...

With the sound of bells ringing, Wei Xiangsi appeared behind Bu Fang and her fair slender hand clasped onto his shoulder. Her red lips seductively opened and she softly whispered, "Don't go, stay here with this elder sister and give this elder sister your recommendation on what's delicious."

Ouyang Xiaoyi only sensed a wave of fragrance wafting past her and her eyes widened when she saw a woman clinging onto the smelly boss as if she was trying to stick her entire body on Bu Fang.

"How could there be such a shameless woman in this world!" Ouyang Xiaoyi furiously thought, "Is she trying to seduce the smelly boss?"

Bu Fang was frowning as he gave the woman a glance. He expressionlessly said, "Take your hand away from me and stay further away from me. The odor coming from your body is too pungent."

"Oh my, is this younger brother feeling shy?" Wei Xiangsi was surprised for a moment before she let out a chuckle. She stretched out her fair and slender hand and reached for Bu Fang's chin.

"Slap!" Bu Fang expressionlessly lifted his hand and immediately swatted Wei Xiangsi's hand away.

Wei Xiangsi was startled for a moment. Thereafter, the expression on her face gradually became cold and surging waves of true energy appeared around her body as well.

"You're really not planning to give this elder sister any face." Wei Xiangsi started to sneer. Even since she entered the imperial city, she kept hearing that the owner of the black-hearted store was extremely arrogant. Not only were the price of his dishes expensive, his temper was terrible as well. Now that she had seen the person in question, she thought that he truly lived up to his name.

"Are you planning to cause trouble within the store?" Bu Fang puzzledly asked as he gave her a glance.

"Until now, there's still someone foolish enough to cause trouble within my store? These three women must be either bimbos or fresh off the boat..." Bu Fang thought.

Sitting nearby, Ji Chengxue was feeling extremely pleased as he popped a piece of Red Braised Meat into his mouth and drank a mouthful of Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine. Incidentally, he could also watch Owner Bu getting teased. He was in an extremely relaxed mood as he spent the day in a very comfortable manner.

Nearby, Ouyang Xiaoyi was fumingly glaring at Wei Xiangsi, thinking, "This shameless woman..."

When Bu Fang saw that the woman was not responding, he could not be bothered to care about her anymore and continued to head toward the kitchen. However, as he took the first step, Wei Xiangsi who had just recovered from her daze tried to get close to him once more.

Buzz...

A ray of red light flashed by and Whitey appeared in front of Wei Xiangsi. Its mechanical eyes turned toward her as it mechanically said, "Troublemakers will be stripped as an example to others."

"Oh my, you little hooligan, you actually want to strip this elder sister! How annoying! However, this elder sister likes this kind of younger brother." The corners of Wei Xiangsi's mouth widened

into a sneer as her eyes went cold. The true energy within her body intertwined around her flawless hand as she reached toward Bu Fang.

Bang!!

However, in the next moment, a dull thud sounded out and Wei Xiangsi screamed as she stumbled several steps backward. She looked toward Whitey who pushed her backward in surprise.

"This puppet is a little interesting. Could this be your store's trump card that Hun Qianyun mentioned? Sisters... Let's attack together and tear this lump of steel apart! We'll bring it back and parade it in front of Hun Qianyun. Incidentally, we could give this as a meeting gift to His Highness," Wei Xiangsi said with a chuckle.

Since they were working with King Yu, they must give him a meeting gift. At the very least, they had to make King Yu acknowledge the Joyous Union Sect and the best method was to let King Yu know about their capability. Currently, Hun Qianyun was highly acknowledged by King Yu. However, as long as they could deal with this store that once caused Hun Qianyun to admit defeat, they would be able to prove that they were more capable than him.

Chapter 123: Go Back, Don't Embarrass Yourself Any Further

Since they were working together, they naturally needed to display their capabilities so that King Yu would acknowledge them. Within the current imperial city, there were not many chances for them to display their capabilities. However, they coincidentally heard some rumors about this black-hearted store and that Hun Qianyun had once admitted defeat at this store as well. This was practically the ideal chance for them to display their capability.

Therefore, Wei Xiangsi came along with two of her Battle-King subordinates.

From Wei Xiangsi's point of view, Hun Qianyun, who looked like he had one foot in the grave, was defeated probably because he was incapable. However, just because Hun Qianyun lost did not mean that they were unable to win, especially when they found out that the owner of the store was a male.

From their point of view, there was no man that they could not handle.

The Joyous Union Sect was one of the heterodox sects within the Ten Great Sects. The majority of its members were female and specialized in [harvesting yang energy to replenish their yin energy](#) in order to increase cultivation level, which was considered an evil method.

Harvesting yang energy to replenish yin energy (采阳补阴)- In Daoism, this refers to sexual cultivation techniques that balances the yin and yang between the two practitioners. In novels, this sort of technique is usually used by evil practitioners to steal the other parties' cultivation through sexual intercourse.

However, the Joyous Union Sect was still a sect with a powerful background after all. They had a lot of capital and their methods

were innumerable. Wei Xiangsi and her two companions stood together, forming a magic array with their bodies. As true energy emanated from their bodies, a pink mist drifted out from between the three of them.

The dense cloud of pink mist seemed to have a strange scent, causing one to enter an unconscious state after inhaling the smell.

Bu Fang immediately started frowning after inhaling some of the scent and a trace of coldness flashed in the depth of his eyes. Within a store that was filled with the aroma of several dishes, including this scent was as disgusting as adding rat poop into a pot of soup.

"Whitey, throw the three of them out," Bu Fang coldly said after finally losing his patience.

Whitey's mechanical eyes flashed after receiving Bu Fang's command and suddenly disappeared from the spot.

"Do you really think a lousy lump of iron can deal with the three of us? Right now, are you feeling as if the blood within your body is boiling? Do you feel extremely uncomfortable?" Wei Xiangsi seductively asked with a smile.

She could not feel even the slightest trace of true energy from Whitey's body, so she thought there was probably nothing special with Whitey and was completely looking down on it.

However, in the next moment, from Wei Xiangsi perspective, Whitey's mechanical eyes suddenly enlarged as it suddenly appeared right in front of her.

Wei Xiangsi was surprised for a moment, and soon discovered that her entire body was flying in the air...

Rip!

During the instant Wei Xiangsi was sent flying, she felt a terrifying force acting upon her, causing her pink gauze outfit to be torn into shreds and leaving only a pink dudou and underpants.

Bang!

The magic array formed by the three women was destroyed by the violent wind produced while Whitey was waving its arms, and Wei Xiangsi and her companions were directly thrown out of the store by Whitey in an almost naked state.

The sound of three heavy objects landing on the snow sounded out, producing dull thuds.

Subsequently, a high-pitched scream came from within the pile of snow and Wei Xiangsi clambered out from the snow, wearing only a dudou and underpants. Her fair and slender legs were white as snow, and her curvaceous, stunning figure was completely exposed.

Wei Xiangsi took out a gauze outfit from her storage space and put it on. Her pretty face had become extremely frosty.

Getting stripped naked and thrown out of a store, Wei Xiangsi had never suffered such a heavy loss in her life. It was simply too humiliating.

Wei Xiangsi stamped the ground with her delicate foot and true energy gushed out from her body, dispersing the snowflakes around her. She suddenly charged toward the store with her long hair fluttering behind her.

Whitey was standing watch at the entrance of the store. Seeing that Wei Xiangsi was charging over, its mechanical eyes slightly flashed and it threw out a punch.

Boom! Wei Xiangsi flew backward and fiercely collided into a wall, deeply embedding into it...

"Reoffenders... will be eliminated," Whitey mechanically said. While its mechanical eyes were flickering, a ray of purple light seemed to have flashed past, causing Wei Xiangsi who had just clambered out from the wall to stiffen for a moment...

Ho... How terrifying!

Wei Xiangsi's pretty face had turned deathly pale and her red phoenix eyes contained a hint of fear. If she still had not realized Whitey's formidableness, then she would really be a bimbo...

This black-hearted store was terrifying indeed. A mere puppet was enough to suppress her to a point where she could not even retaliate.

Within the tranquil alleyway, only the heavy breathing of Wei Xiangsi—who was enduring Whitey's dreadful suppression—could be heard. Just then, the sound of footsteps rang out.

At the entrance of the alleyway, a figure was slowly approaching at a leisure pace.

Wei Xiangsi turned her head with much difficulty. When she saw the face of the approaching person, her pupils immediately constricted and she sucked in a breath of cold air.

"Your Highness!"

King Yu was wearing a brocade robe with a purple crown on his head. The belt inlaid with precious gemstones around his waist fully expressed his muscular figure. Holding his hands behind his back, his eyebrows knitted together when he indifferently swept his gaze toward Wei Xiangsi, whose attire was disheveled.

"Go back, don't embarrass yourself any further," King Yu mildly said before directly stepping past the three women and entering the store.

Whitey did not obstruct King Yu, so he directly stepped into the store. Stepping from a world of ice and snow into the warm interior of the store, the warmth that instantly enveloped his body startled King Yu.

However, King Yu soon recovered and his gaze landed on Ji Chengxue, who was, at that moment, popping a piece of Red Braised Meat into his mouth.

Ji Chengxue seemed to have sensed King Yu's gaze and let out a

chuckle. Raising a piece of Red Braised Meat in King Yu's direction, he swallowed it in a single mouthful and drank a cup of Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine before smacking his lips.

"Owner Bu, I'll have a serving of Red Braised Meat and Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine as well," King Yu said with a chuckle as he nodded toward Bu Fang. He was different from that bimbo, Wei Xiangsi. King Yu understood clearly the horror of this store. That puppet was definitely not the store's trump card. The real trump card was the black dog soundly sleeping at the entrance.

Therefore, King Yu would not choose to cause trouble within the store, and the purpose of his visit was not to cause trouble either.

Bu Fang gave King Yu a glance and nodded before entering the kitchen.

After Bu Fang was gone, King Yu stood in front of Ji Chengxue and condescendingly looked down at him. His gaze contained a trace of oppressive feeling.

"Why have you come back? If you had obediently stayed outside, everything would be fine... What are you trying to do by coming back?" King Yu asked.

Ji Chengxue put down his chopsticks. He lifted up the jar of Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine and poured the wine that was clear like mountain spring water into the wine cup. The rich aroma of the wine, accompanied with the sound of the liquid being poured, spread into the surroundings.

"Father has passed away. Am I not supposed to fulfill my duty as a son and attend his mourning?" Ji Chengxue mildly replied after taking a sip of the Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine.

"Mourning? With your army camping right outside the imperial city?" King Yu retorted with a sneer as he sat down opposite to Ji Chengxue, with his gaze suddenly turning cold.

Ji Chengxue had returned and brought along the expedition

army as well. His true intentions were somewhat thought-provoking.

In normal circumstances, Ji Chengxue—as the commander of the expedition—should have returned alone if he wanted to attend the mourning. Once the mourning ended, he could return to his army. However, once Ji Chengxue brought his army along with him, the meaning behind his action would be quite different.

Ouyang Xiaoyi's eyes widened. She suddenly felt as if the atmosphere within the store had become somewhat strange. She only felt slightly better after moving to the kitchen window.

A question and answer session occurred between King Yu and Ji Chengxue, like they were having a good time. However, Ouyang Xiaoyi kept having the feeling that the two were having a tense confrontation.

Soon, Bu Fang came out from the kitchen with the overwhelmingly fragrant Red Braised Meat in one hand while carrying a jar of wine with the other hand.

Bu Fang placed the wine and the meat in front of King Yu and the latter nodded toward him.

Ji Chengxue was slightly tipsy as he stood up after he finished eating and drinking down the last cup of wine as well. He handed over the crystals to Bu Fang and put on his fur overcoat before heading outside.

"Since you're insisting on participating, then you should be ready to pay the price... This price might be unbearable for you."

Ji Chengxue had just reached the entrance when King Yu eerily spoke up. Ji Chengxue suddenly stopped and lightly breathed out. He turned his head toward King Yu and tauntingly asked with a smile, "What sort of price? My life?"

With a laughter, Ji Chengxue stepped out of the store and his figure gradually disappeared in the snowstorm.

Chapter 124: Fire Tree Blossoms, Spirit Energy Dish

After Ji Chengxue left, a travel-worn figure entered the store with two other people following behind.

Bu Fang glanced in their direction and saw Ni Yan and her two disciples. Ni Yan was carefully carrying a wooden lunch box which was enveloped by her true energy, preventing the cold air from entering the lunch box and ruining the flavor of the dish.

"Owner Bu, my dish is done. Try it out and see whether you're satisfied!" Ni Yan was very confident. Above the veil that covered her face, her eyes were sparkling like gemstones.

Bu Fang softly exclaimed. He never anticipated that Ni Yan would actually bring a dish over.

Since there were no pending orders and Bu Fang was in the mood as well, he sat down at a table and beckoned Ni Yan to bring the dish out for him to have a look.

King Yu was having his meal nearby and he saw Ni Yan and her disciples as well. He was slightly startled because he recognized Ni Yan. After all, the disturbance created by this woman from the night before was not small.

"This hot-tempered female Battle-Saint actually came to Owner Bu's store? Are the two of them part of the same group?" King Yu thought.

Bu Fang was not putting much thought into it and was rather looking forward to Ni Yan's dish. The other party was reportedly the number one chef within the Celestial Arcanum Sect and her cooking managed to subdue everyone within the sect. Therefore, her culinary skills should not be too bad.

Ni Yan placed the wooden lunch box onto the table and dispersed the true energy before uncovering the lunch. Immediately, the rich

fragrance of fresh vegetables wafted out from the wooden lunch box.

Bu Fang took a deep breath. He raised his eyebrows and indiscernibly nodded. Judging from the smell alone, he could tell that the taste of Ni Yan's dish should be pretty good. This fragrance was even capable of provoking Bu Fang's appetite.

When Ni Yan brought out the dish, Bu Fang's eyes slightly narrowed. He raised his head and gave Ni Yan a meaningful glance.

This was a dish that broke new ground. Evidently, Ni Yan spent a lot of effort on this dish.

The dish was a fist-sized fruit with a rind that was the color of fire and there was even a faint amount of flames burning on its surface. This fruit was directly sliced open down the middle by Ni Yan and the pulp was dug out before being replaced with golden rice grains. The rice grains were covered with a layer of sauce with a unique and rich aroma. Steam could be seen rising from the dish.

"What's the name of this dish?" Bu Fang asked after inhaling the fragrance.

"This is my signature dish, Fire Tree Blossoms, and it's also the dish which my control over the spirit energy is the most stable. This dish should still be able to store around thirty percent more spirit energy," Ni Yan earnestly said.

This was a dish that contained spirit energy. Bu Fang was starting to acknowledge the dish as well because it was very similar to his own dishes. Not only was the aroma of the dish unique, but it also contained spirit energy.

Bu Fang took out a porcelain spoon and gently scooped a spoonful of the golden rice grains. The fragrance emanating from the rice was not any inferior to Bu Fang's Egg-Fried Rice.

This fragrance contained the scent of various fruits, and there was also a distinct smell of a pleurably sour sauce.

As Bu Fang shoved the golden rice grains into his mouth, these rice grains were unexpectedly savory and also extremely chewy. They were just like soft candies. After biting down, he felt as if those rice grains were bouncing between his teeth, producing a unique flavor.

The taste was pretty good as well. Mixing the flavor of the pulp and the sauce, it instantly enveloped his taste buds.

Bu Fang's eyes lit up and he shoved two more spoonfuls into his mouth. After chewing for a while, he said, "Not bad."

This "Fire Tree Blossoms" was indeed not a bad dish. Even though the amount of spirit energy contained within the dish was low and was even lower than the store's normal Egg-Fried Rice, its flavor was astonishing.

"I chose the second grade spirit fruit, Fire Spirit Fruit, for my dish. The pulp of the fruit and its rind have different colors, but the their tastes are very compatible. It's not only deliciously sweet and sour, but also contains spirit energy. This golden rice was soaked with Fire Head Bee Honey beforehand and then cooked together with the pulp of the Fire Spirit Fruit. After enclosing the rice within the rind of the fruit and steaming it for a while, the Fire Tree Blossoms is completed," Ni Yan said, while feeling rather proud of her dish.

Bu Fang wanted her to demonstrate her signature dish, so she did in order to subdue Bu Fang.

However, in the next moment, the triumphant expression on her face froze.

Bu Fang rubbed his chin as he gave her a glance and said, "The taste of this dish is not bad and the flavor is very unique as well, but there are still many flaws present... Since you're using the rind of the Fire Spirit Fruit to envelop the golden rice grains before carrying out the steaming process, you need to be extremely precise about the steaming duration and ensure every single grain

of rice was soaked with honey. Evidently, you did not notice this mistake while carrying out this step."

Once Bu Fang started giving his assessment, he did not hold back in the slightest. Even Ni Yan did not realize there were so many flaws present in her dish.

"My main problem is that I didn't properly control the spirit energy. If I can increase the concentration of spirit energy by a little more, this dish would definitely be even tastier!" Ni Yan said, feeling slightly unconvinced by his assessment.

Bu Fang gave her a glance and mildly replied, "The amount of spirit energy cannot completely determine the flavor of a dish. Are you saying that dishes can't be delicious without spirit energy? This kind of thinking does not tally with the ideology of a chef."

Tang Yin and Lu Xiaoxiao were dumbfounded as they stood behind Ni Yan and their expressions were filled with astonishment.

This was the first time they saw someone pointing out so many flaws in their master's cooking... As expected of their senior!

"Therefore, I suggest you start from the basics. Once you're able to satisfy the taste of the general masses with ordinary dishes that don't contain spirit energy, that would show that you've improved." This was Bu Fang's suggestion to Ni Yan, which made Ni Yan ponder for a long while.

...

As the night descended, the snowstorm that lasted for a whole day finally stopped. Only the sound of the whistling wind was left in the cold winter night, driving away the silence.

In the end, Bu Fang did not choose to teach Ni Yan about the cooking method of spirit energy dishes. Rather, he told her to practice making ordinary dishes everyday and only come back after she was satisfied with her own work.

Under the kitchen's gentle lighting, Bu Fang had carefully started the elixir cuisine's practice cooking. Since Xiao Yue had only provided a single portion of ingredients, Bu Fang did not dare to rashly start the actual cooking of the elixir cuisine without having complete confidence. After all, there were times when even he would fail.

As billows of steam filled the entire kitchen, the rich aroma of the abalone and medicinal fragrance were entangled together.

The evening passed while he was cooking this elixir cuisine...

The next day, Bu Fang woke up as usual and started practicing the Big Dipper Carving Technique. Everyday, he would complete the training missions arranged by the system. Bu Fang understood clearly that there was no shortcut to success and he needed to put in more effort than anyone else to become the God of Cooking. Success was not achievable with words alone.

The store opened and closed as usual. During the night, it was time for Bu Fang to practice cooking the elixir cuisine again.

Finally, after practicing like this for the past two days, the actual day had arrived. On this day, Bu Fang was preparing to use the actual ingredients to cook the elixir cuisine that was able to treat mental traumas.

Within the Xiao manor, Xiao Meng suddenly received an invitation from the third prince, who seemingly wanted to discuss an important matter. With the unstable situation in the imperial city, Xiao Meng did not dare to idle about. He left the Xiao Manor and headed for the third prince's residence.

Shortly after Xiao Meng left, Xiao Yue—who was wearing a bamboo hat with a black veil while holding a longsword in his hand—appeared within the snowstorm, staring straight at the majestic Xiao manor.

Chapter 125: You Unfilial Son, Where Do You Think You're Going!

Snow was swirling about and falling from the sky, accompanied with the rustling winter wind. Deep inside the Xiao manor, between the pavilions, there was a small path leading toward a tranquil location.

Inside of a lavish room, candles were lit and the fireplace was burning, increasing the temperature within the room to a rather warm level. A censer was placed in front of a wooden window that was propped open. The smoke from the censer lingered in the area, filling the entire room with the smell of incense.

A delicate figure with a fur cloak draped over her shoulders was sitting next to the censer and a zither was placed in front of her. Her flawless hands were dexterously moving about on the zither, just like a transcendent elf.

The melodious sound of the zither drifted out and was pleasing to the ears, like the sound of raindrops falling on lotus leaves, causing its listeners to fall into enchantment.

There was a faint trace of sorrow on Xiao Yanyu's flawlessly beautiful face. As her beautiful fingers played the zither, her emotions seemed to have turned into notes and drifted out from the zither. The bangs of her hair spilled over her eyes, covering half of her facial features which was like that of a banished immortal.

Xiao Xiaolong's figure walked into the room. He brushed away the snow that accumulated on him and softly said with a smile, "Elder sister, you're playing the zither in mother's room again. Aren't you worried about disturbing mother?"

The sound of the zither stopped and was followed by a sigh. "If only it could disturb mother, then I would play the zither every

single day."

Xiao Yanyu gave Xiao Xiaolong a glance and snappily said, "You rascal, isn't father forcing you to cultivate? Why do you have the time to come over and chat today?"

"Hehe, father went to look for the third prince, so he let me off today. I've been cultivating so much recently that my bones are aching. That's right, why don't we go and eat at Owner Bu's place? It's been a while since we've been there. I am really craving for his dishes," Xiao Xiaolong said.

Xiao Yanyu rolled her eyes at Xiao Xiaolong. This was probably his real purpose for visiting her. Who said he was a prodigy? He was just a glutton.

"You're really... Hmm? Who's there!" Just when Xiao Yanyu was about to reprimand Xiao Xiaolong, her expression slightly changed and she suddenly looked outside of the window.

Within the whirlwind of snow outside, a figure was slowly approaching while stepping on the frozen surface of the pond. The black robe he wore was flapping violently in the cold wind and the bamboo hat concealed his face, preventing anyone from seeing his appearance.

However, when Xiao Yanyu and Xiao Xiaolong saw this figure, their pupils slightly constricted...

Xiao Yue stepped into the room, took off his bamboo hat and breathed out a cloud of breath. As he looked at Xiao Yanyu and Xiao Xiaolong who were staring at him in bewilderment, he suddenly smiled.

"It's been a while." Xiao Yue's hoarse voice rang out.

However, the reply he got was a surging wave of true energy attack.

Xiao Yanyu's face was filled with rage as she stared at Xiao Yue. Xiao Xiaolong was also vigilantly staring at Xiao Yue, not knowing

his purpose for suddenly appearing within the Xiao manor.

"You still dare to come back! You still have the cheek to come back!" Xiao Yanyu shouted.

The smile on Xiao Yue's face disappeared and he indifferently gave Xiao Yanyu a glance. As the corners of his mouth widened, the tip of his toes brushed against the ground and as if a burst of wind had just blew past, he appeared next to Xiao Yanyu.

Xiao Yanyu's entire body froze. She felt as if the true energy within her body was being impeded by a terrifying mass of sword energy and was completely immovable. Her body could not even move a single inch, so she could only vehemently stare at Xiao Yue.

Xiao Yue smiled in a carefree manner. He stretched out his hand and patted Xiao Yanyu's head. Thereafter, he slowly walked past her and headed in the direction of the person lying on the bed.

"What are you trying to do!" A touch of redness emerged on Xiao Xiaolong's fair skin as he blocked Xiao Yue's path in a huff, preventing him from going any further.

"Hmm? You mischievous brat, you've grown up as well... You even dare to block my way." Xiao Yue broke into a grin.

Xiao Xiaolong's pupils constricted and true energy gushed out of his body. The cultivation of a peak level third grade Battle-Maniac was fully displayed. He raised his hands and took a fighting stance...

Xiao Yue tilted his head and a hint of amusement appeared on his face as he watched Xiao Xiaolong charge toward him. He slowly raised a finger and poked Xiao Xiaolong on his forehead.

Xiao Xiaolong's figure that was charging forward was immediately stopped. His eyes widened as his body staggered backward and fell to the ground.

"Don't worry, I don't have any ill intentions." Xiao Yue's hoarse voice slowly resounded inside the room.

Xiao Yanyu did not believe his words but she was unable to move her body... She was so anxious that she felt like screaming out loud.

Xiao Yue stopped next to the bed. Smoke was slowly emanating from a censer placed next to the bed. A graceful woman was serenely lying on the bed with her eyes closed.

The woman had a beautiful face. In a closer look, some resemblance between her and Xiao Yanyu could be seen.

Xiao Yue's eyes were somewhat complicated as he let out a soft sigh. He took off the heavy and thick cloak from his shoulders and placed it over the woman's body.

"You... can't take mother away!" Xiao Xiaolong struggled to get up from the ground. However, Xiao Yue raised his hand and an invisible force pressed down on Xiao Xiaolong's body once more, causing him to fall on his behind. He could only watch with bloodshot eyes as Xiao Yue carried their mother, Ji Ru'Er, away.

Xiao Yanyu's entire body was trembling as she bit her lips tightly. She was filled with rage as she stared at Xiao Yue.

Xiao Yue was carrying Ji Ru'Er on his back. As he reached the doorway, he turned toward them and said with a smile, "The two of you were so much cuter back then. Don't worry, I really don't have any bad intentions. I'll wake our mother up."

After he was done speaking, Xiao Yue put on his bamboo hat once more and leapt into the air, disappearing from their view. Only the rustling winter wind blowing in from the doorway was left.

As the sword energy on her body dissipated with a loud noise, Xiao Yanyu's body trembled for a moment before she hurriedly moved toward the door. She stared into the snow outside but Xiao Yue's figure was nowhere to be seen.

Buzz!

After a while, as a figure approached while stepping on thin air,

the falling snow that filled the air seemed to have stopped. Xiao Meng's face was gloomy as he landed in the small yard. When he saw Xiao Xiaolong limply sitting on the ground and Xiao Yanyu on the verge of tears, he suddenly felt an anger rising in his chest.

"Father... Mother was taken away!" When Xiao Yanyu saw Xiao Meng, the grievance in her heart immediately spilled out.

"Xiao Yue!" Anger flashed in Xiao Meng's eyes, but he was feeling even more suspicious. Ji Chengxue invited him over to discuss matters at his manor and Xiao Yue arrived right after Xiao Meng left... There was definitely something strange about this.

Suddenly turning around, Xiao Meng instantly dashed out of the Xiao manor and rose into the air above. He rapidly scanned the surroundings.

"Hmm?" Xiao Meng was slightly agitated as he took a step forward and swiftly sped into the distance.

Xiao Yue was carrying his mother, Ji Ru'Er on his back. His true energy was covering her body to block the swirling snow—so that his mother would not freeze from the cold weather—as he slowly headed in the direction of the alleyway.

Suddenly, a thunderous sound came from behind him, startling Xiao Yue for a moment. A mass of intense sword energy gushed out from his body and turned into an indistinct longsword, slashing behind him.

Bang...

As Xiao Yue's sword energy dissipated with a loud noise, his body trembled for a moment. He increased his pace and dashed toward the alleyway. Fang Fang's Little Store was not far away.

Xiao Meng's face was clouded with fury as he landed. Watching Xiao Yue who was making a run for it in the distance, he angrily shouted, "You unfilial son, where do you think you're going!"

As Xiao Meng's figure moved, it was as if the ground was shrinking

as he swiftly closed the distance between them, creating a series of afterimages.

A dreadful pressure approached Xiao Yue like a surging wave, pushing away the swirling snow in the surroundings.

As Xiao Yue turned around, his longsword flew out of its sheath and exposed its dazzling edge. He formed a sword-finger gesture with his hand and the sword transformed into four swords, forming a sword array. Xiao Yue made a pushing motion with his hand and the swords flew toward the approaching Xiao Meng.

This time round, Xiao Meng did not hold back in the slightest. His palm was glimmering as he threw out a palm strike, instantly destroying the sword array.

Xiao Yue let out a groan. Borrowing the force of this impact, he reached the store's entrance and burrowed into Fang Fang's Little Store.

Xiao Meng was already seeing red. He gathered true energy into his palm, planning to blast the store away...

However, the big black dog lying on the ground lazily gave him a glance and let out a snort. With a wave of its exquisite and delicate paws, the true energy gathered on Xiao Meng's shimmering palm was shattered with a loud bang. Xiao Meng himself felt as if a tremendous force slammed into him, causing him to stumble a few steps backward.

Xiao Meng felt as if a basin of icy cold water was poured on his head and immediately became clear-headed. Only then did he realize that Xiao Yue had burrowed into Bu Fang's store.

Chapter 126: Amethyst Spirit Abalone Soup

Xiao Yue brought Ru'Er into Fang Fang's Little Store? What exactly was this rascal planning to do?

Seeing that Xiao Yue had burrowed into Fang Fang's Little Store, Xiao Meng breathed a sigh of relief. The reason being, since Xiao Yue had chosen to enter the store, he was naturally not going to harm Ji Ru'Er.

As Xiao Meng recalled the dreadful aura just now that caused his true energy to disperse, his gaze became somewhat grave when he looked at the lazy big black dog lying at the entrance.

Placing both of his hands together, he performed a fist and palm salute toward Blacky to express his apology for his disrespectful action just now. If someone else was around to witness this scene, their jaws would be dropping to the ground.

The number one expert of the Light Wind Empire was actually expressing his apology to a big black dog. This was definitely an eye-opening scene.

Blacky gave Xiao Meng a glance before letting out a snort and going back to sleep. At the same time, Xiao Meng breathed a sigh of relief when he felt the pressure surrounding him had suddenly disappeared.

After giving Blacky an uneasy glance, Xiao Meng turned and stepped into Bu Fang's store.

...

From the system's storage space, Bu Fang took out the two ingredients that Xiao Yue had given him, the Amethyst Heart Orchid and the Sky Spirit Abalone.

The entire Amethyst Heart Orchid was emanating a clear purple light with a faint trace of burning aura. It was not obvious just from looking but when one's eyes were closed, one could feel

energy radiating from the Amethyst Heart Orchid, as if it was a small sun.

The Sky Spirit Abalone was slightly larger than the Black Spirit Abalone and the amount of spirit energy within the Sky Spirit Abalone was much higher as well. After all, it was a fifth grade spirit beast. Its value was naturally not something the Black Spirit Abalone could compare with.

Furthermore, the veined patterns on the shell of the Sky Spirit Abalone were much more complicated than those of the Black Spirit Abalone and its spirit array was clearly of a higher grade.

Since Bu Fang had already used replacement ingredients to practice twice before, he had already memorized the steps to cook the Amethyst Spirit Abalone Soup. In addition, Bu Fang had already made proper adjustments to the true energy culinary method according to the difference in spirit energy level between the two sets of ingredients.

After washing the Sky Spirit Abalone, Bu Fang took out a huge claypot which was the only one he had that could contain the entire Sky Spirit Abalone.

Using the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife, Bu Fang made a cut on the meat of the Sky Spirit Abalone. After the opening was made, he chopped the other spirit herbs and placed them around the Sky Spirit Abalone. Thereafter, he filled the claypot with spring water from [Tian Shan](#) and placed the lid over the claypot before simmering.

Tian Shan (天山) - This is an actual mountain range in China.

While the claypot was simmering, Bu Fang began to prepare processing the Amethyst Heart Orchid.

This was an orchid with a blue flower bud. Both its petals and leaves were plump, as if containing an extremely huge amount of energy.

With the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife, Bu Fang cautiously removed the petals and the leaves and placed them separately apart. After making a cut on every petal, thick purple juice flowed out from the openings. The juice had a peculiar characteristic that caused a slight burning sensation on the skin when in close proximity.

Taking out a jade cup, Bu Fang stored the juice from the petals into the cup and exactly filled it to the brim. The purple liquid was crystal clear and emitted a rich aroma.

Next, Bu Fang removed the lid of the claypot and the rich aroma of the Sky Spirit Abalone immediately gushed out, causing him to be unable to help but take a deep breath.

The aroma of the Sky Spirit Abalone did not possess the fishy scent that seafood usually had and was extremely sweet instead. Before even tasting, Bu Fang's mind was already affected by the sweetness and both his body and mind were already relaxed.

After Bu Fang diced the leaves of the Amethyst Heart Orchid, he added them into the claypot and replaced the lid. His expression became serious.

With one hand placed on the lid of the claypot, the true energy that was naturally circulating within his dantian surged to his hand—causing the surface of his palm to sparkle—and then flowed into the claypot.

Within Bu Fang's mind, he could clearly view the scene within the claypot as if it was happening before his eyes.

The flow of true energy stimulated the spirit energy inside the claypot to continuously circulate and begin infusing into the Sky Spirit Abalone. The cut made on the Sky Spirit Abalone slightly opened and started forming bubbles. As the bubbles popped, spirit energy was released within claypot.

As Bu Fang watched this scene, he became relieved and continued

to stimulate the spirit energy to envelop the Sky Spirit Abalone. Soon, he completed the first phase of the cooking process.

Fine beads of sweat appeared on his forehead. Compared to cooking with the replacement ingredients, the authentic Sky Spirit Abalone used up much more of his true energy and caused Bu Fang to feel somewhat fatigued.

Lifting up the lid, the fragrance was stronger than before and there seemed to be faint sparkles of light circulating within the claypot. The reason was Bu Fang's infusion of true energy had activated the spirit array on the shell of the Sky Spirit Abalone.

As the petals of the Amethyst Heart Orchid were tossed into the claypot, the bubbling soup immediately engulfed the petals. Bu Fang picked up the jade cup, which was somewhat scalding to the touch, and poured its contents into the claypot. The intensity of the aroma wafting from the claypot doubled in an instant.

As Bu Fang inhaled the fragrance, even he was feeling so comfortable that he wanted to moan. This sort of comfortable feeling was not affecting his body but his mind.

The sort of magical power produced when two ingredients that could treat mental traumas were combined together was unimaginable.

After the lid was replaced, Bu Fang continued to use the true energy culinary method to simmer the elixir cuisine.

After reaching this step, this dish of elixir cuisine was basically already completed. As for the extent of success, it depended on how well Bu Fang could handle true energy culinary in the next phase. However, after spending two days of practice, Bu Fang already had enough confidence to complete this elixir cuisine.

...

As Xiao Meng stepped into the store, the warmth did not dispel the frostiness on his face in the slightest. His expression was still

cold as he looked at Xiao Yue, who was sitting on a chair.

Xiao Yue was holding his chest and slightly out of breath. True energy was circulating on his palm as he treated the injuries within his body.

"What exactly are you planning? Have you not harm Ru'Er enough? What are you trying to do now? Are you really planning to commit matricide for the sake of transcendence?!" Xiao Meng's voice was cold as the icebergs of Antarctica and every single sentence was filled with anger.

Xiao Yue let out a chuckle and shook his head. His eyes were complicated as he looked at Xiao Meng and mildly said, "Father, you know my objective. I came to Owner Bu's place today not to harm mother... but to save her."

"Save her?" Xiao Meng was startled for a moment. Thereafter, his pupils constricted and he asked, "Did you request Owner Bu to cook the elixir cuisine to save Ru'Er?"

"No... The Sage Herb Phoenix Chicken Soup is useless for Ru'Er's injury. You should know well enough. Your sword strike not only shattered her heart, but also severely injured her mind," Xiao Meng continued as he let out a sigh and shook his head.

The corners of Xiao Yue's mouth widened, but he did not reply and turned his head toward the kitchen instead.

From the darkness of the kitchen, a slender figure walked out with a claypot in his hands. Clouds of steam were rising from the claypot along with a rich fragrance.

As the fragrance filled the room, everyone within the store subconsciously took a deep breath and immediately felt reinvigorated and energetic.

Xiao Meng was pleasantly surprised and his eyes were fixated on the claypot. Judging from the smell... the elixir cuisine this time was obviously not the Sage Herb Phoenix Chicken Soup!

Bu Fang looked in surprise at Xiao Meng, who was standing at the doorway, and then continued to walk toward Xiao Yue with the claypot before placing it before him.

After his hands released the claypot, only then did Bu Fang stop the circulation of true energy and heavily breathed out...

After cooking this Amethyst Spirit Abalone Soup, Bu Fang was so exhausted that he felt like he was going to collapse and the true energy circulating within his dantian was almost depleted. He could not help but sigh internally. His cultivation level was indeed too low.

"Here's your Amethyst Spirit Abalone Soup, please enjoy your meal," Bu Fang said to Xiao Yue.

Thereafter, as he carefully lifted up the lid of the claypot, dazzling beams of light immediately flooded out from within the claypot along with a stormy wave of fragrance.

Chapter 127: The Emperor's Posthumous Edict

The dish was actually glowing!

Both Xiao Meng and Xiao Yue were dumbfounded and their attention were completely attracted by the glow and rich fragrance before them. Within the claypot, beams of light appeared to be emerging from a pupa as they filled their field of vision. It was that dazzling and eye-catching.

The light only lasted for a single breath before vanishing. Steam was rising from the claypot as if the fragrance had become visible.

Xiao Yue swallowed his saliva. He felt as if the injuries caused by Xiao Meng had all recovered in that moment and he did not feel even the slightest pain. His gaze landed on the dish contained inside the claypot.

The Amethyst Spirit Abalone Soup was not a thick soup and was different from the Sage Herb Phoenix Chicken Soup. It was not greasy but extremely refreshing instead. The soup was clear and transparent, like spring water from the mountains. Even the Sky Spirit Abalone lying at the bottom of the soup could be clearly seen.

The Sky Spirit Abalone was completely cooked. The inner flesh of the abalone was protruding from the cut and was emitting a rich fragrance. The soup did not possess even the slightest impurity, and the Amethyst Heart Orchid had completely dissolved into the soup without leaving even a trace of residue.

It was as if the Amethyst Spirit Abalone Soup was cooked using the Sky Spirit Abalone and spring water from Tian Shan alone.

Bu Fang took out a small celadon bowl and used a celadon spoon to fill the bowl with soup. The soup was extremely clear. If it was not for its fragrance, they would mistake it for a bowl of boiled

water.

As Xiao Yue accepted the bowl of soup from Bu Fang, he recovered from his surprise and set his mother, who was leaning on the chair, upright. Xiao Meng came forward and took over the bowl from Xiao Yue's hand.

The calmness and composure on the face of the empire's number one expert, Xiao Meng, was already long gone. There was only carefulness and uncertainty left.

With trembling hands, Xiao Meng scooped up a spoonful of soup and slowly fed Ji Ru'Er. His heart was in his mouth as he stared at her pallid face without blinking.

Suddenly, his eyes lit up with intense brightness. He discovered that a shade of rosiness had appeared on Ji Ru'Er's pallid face after drinking a spoonful of the soup. This was something that had never happened before!

It was effective! It really was effective!

Xiao Meng was so excited that he almost spilled the bowl of soup in his hand. He hurriedly calmed himself and continued to feed the soup to Ji Ru'Er.

Spoon after spoon, he carefully fed her as if he was cherishing his most important treasure.

Bu Fang gave the two of them a glance before using a chopstick to pick up the Sky Spirit Abalone at the bottom of the claypot, and then grabbed hold of the abalone's shell. The magic array on the shell was emanating a fluorescent light and was slightly hot to the touch, and the flesh of the abalone was quivering.

A green wisp of smoke encircled his hand and the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife appeared. After twirling the kitchen knife in his hand, Bu Fang chopped the meat of the Sky Spirit Abalone into fine pieces.

"Feed her this. After absorbing the medicinal effects of the

Amethyst Heart Orchid and various other spirit herbs along with the catalysis effect caused by the spirit array on the shell, the curative effect of the Sky Spirit Abalone should be much better than just drinking the soup," Bu Fang said as he passed the minced abalone to Xiao Meng.

Xiao Meng gave Bu Fang a grateful glance and then fed the minced abalone into Ji Ru'Er's mouth. Ji Ru'Er had not been responding all this time, but her body suddenly shuddered. Her mouth widened and she gently breathed out a mouthful of air.

This mouthful of air contained an abundant amount of spirit energy and filled the interior of the store with a rich fragrance.

Xiao Meng became even more agitated. He excitedly watched as Ji Ru'Er's long eyelashes trembled for a moment and then her eyes slowly opened...

...

As the weather became colder and colder, the snowflakes became thicker and thicker. The pavement of the imperial city's Long Street was covered with snow.

Two figures were slowly proceeding on the Long Street. Ji Chengxue was wearing a white robe with a fur cloak draped over his shoulders. As he travelled within the swirling snow, a powerfully built man wearing flaxen clothing with short sleeves was walking beside him. This man had beard growing all over his face and eyes as large as copper bells.

As the two slowly walked on, they left a trail of footprints behind them.

"Your Highness, tomorrow is the late emperor's funeral, yet Chief Eunuch Lian is summoning all of the princes today. Is he going to proclaim His Majesty's posthumous edict?" the sturdy man with a full beard asked in a deep voice.

Ji Chengxue gave the man a glance and gently replied with a

smile, "Perhaps, but no matter what's written in the edict... those two brothers of mine would definitely have a confrontation."

The man with a full beard looked at Ji Chengxue and suddenly asked, "Your Highness, don't you think the late emperor might have appointed you as his successor in the edict?"

When Ji Chengxue heard the question, he was suddenly stunned. He stopped walking as well and stood still on the spot. The swirling snow whizzed by and the cold wind rustled.

"That's impossible, there's no reason for him to choose me. After all... I am the son he hated the most," Ji Chengxue mildly replied in a distant voice filled with lament.

Thereafter, Ji Chengxue continued to move on and the man with a full beard silently followed him as they headed toward the majestic Main Hall.

At the Gate of Heavenly Mystery, King Yu was standing there in high spirits with a purple crown on his head and a belt inlaid with gemstones around his waist. A middle-aged man was respectfully following behind him with a fawning smile on his face. With a single glance at him, it was apparent that he was someone with a nimble mind.

This person was the Minister of Finance, Sun Qing, who was in charge of the imperial city's financial affairs.

As Ji Chengxue slowly approached from a distance, King Yu gave him a glance and the corners of his mouth widened into a sneer. He turned around before stepping into the Gate of Heavenly Mystery and headed toward the Main Hall.

The Gate of Heavenly Mystery was extremely vast and the ground of the entire plaza was covered by a layer of pure white snow. There were two obelisks with images carved upon them towering in the empty plaza and the top of the obelisks were also covered with snow. As far as the eye could see, there was only a

vast expanse of whiteness.

There were eunuchs here and there at the plaza of the Gate of Heavenly Mystery, clearing away the accumulated snow on the ground. The emperor's funeral was on the next day and the procession would definitely pass through the plaza to get the imperial mausoleum. Therefore, this snow was a hindrance.

At the majestic but somewhat eerie Main Hall, a crowd of people had restlessly gathered there. These people were high-ranking officials of the imperial court and were all respected people within the Light Wind Empire.

The Minister of the Left was standing there with a grave expression in his court uniform, seemingly resting his slightly closed eyes.

The Ouyang family, Yang family, Minister of Finance and other high-ranking officials of the imperial court were also standing there in silence, waiting for Chief Eunuch Lian to appear. They knew that day was definitely not an ordinary day.

After being kept secret for such a long time, the posthumous edict of the late emperor had to be made known in the end and would also determine the eventual ownership of the throne.

Would it be the crown prince? Or would it be King Yu? The many high-ranking officials present were feeling extremely apprehensive.

As for the third prince... The high-ranking officials were basically not feeling optimistic about his chances. The late emperor's attitude toward the third prince gave them the feeling that Ji Chengxue was disliked and disregarded. Therefore, everyone including Ji Chengxue himself thought that his chance of inheriting the throne was the lowest.

The three princes were standing within the Main Hall and the dragon throne cast from gold was right before them, on a

platform. They only needed to take a single step to stand above everyone else.

Suddenly, the Main Hall that was filled with whispering moments ago suddenly became quiet. The crowd parted and Lian Fu slowly entered the Main Hall from the outside with deliberate steps while respectfully carrying the imperial edict in his hands. His expression was solemn and dignified, causing the people gathered there to feel a sudden chill.

After all, he was a seventh grade Battle-Saint and was at a level where any change in his emotions could affect the emotions of the people in his surroundings.

"Gonggong, is... this father's posthumous edict?" The crown prince could not help but ask for confirmation as he looked at the imperial edict in Lian Fu's hands.

Lian Fu gave the crown prince a glance and solemnly nodded.

The crown prince was suddenly overjoyed because he felt that his chances of being chosen by his father was the highest. It was not only because he was the crown prince, but also the fact that he was the most highly regarded by his father.

Lian Fu pinched his thumb and middle finger together and then gently spread open the imperial edict. With the unfurled posthumous edict in his hands, he stood in front of the dragon throne and was ready to start reading the edict out loud.

Below, everyone was holding their breath as they stared at Lian Fu, who was standing before the dragon throne, and waited for the announcement of the next emperor.

Chapter 128: Premeditated Ambush

Lian Fu unfurled the imperial edict and let out a light cough. The sound resounded within the Main Hall, causing everyone present to feel a sudden uneasiness. Everyone was looking at him and the expression on each of their faces was distinctive.

The crown prince's face was full of confidence and his eyes were flashing with an intense brightness, as if victory was in his grasp. On the other hand, King Yu's face was filled with indifference as if he was not interested in the posthumous edict in the slightest, while Ji Chengxue's head was lowered as he played with his own fingers.

Zhao Musheng was standing on the spot with his eyes narrowed, and his body was slightly swaying. The elderly Ouyang was pursing his lips and staring at Lian Fu...

Inside the imperial court, there was a difference in the expression of every single person. However, without any exception, their minds were focused on Lian Fu's every action and were attentively listening to the posthumous edict Lian Fu was about to read aloud.

Lian Fu's high-pitched voice resounded within the Main Hall. The content of the posthumous edict was not long. The beginning of the edict was a recount of Emperor Changfeng's military accomplishments and everyone present knew about them well enough. Their attention was not focused on them but rather on the end of the edict: the successor chosen by the late emperor and the eventual ownership of the throne.

Was it the crown prince? Or was it King Yu?

"The third prince, Chengxue, has an upright moral character and greatly resembles me. He is certainly capable of inheriting my empire. He shall succeed my throne and become the next emperor."

However, when Lian Fu read out the end of the edict, the entire imperial court was so quiet that they would hear a pin dropping. Everyone was stupefied.

In His Majesty's edict... the successor chosen was... the third prince?

This was as if a bolt out of the blue had suddenly struck the Main Hall, causing everyone present to be somewhat dumbfounded.

The expression on the crown prince's face completely froze and his eyes were wide from shock. His face was filled with incredulity and his mouth was slightly opened, seemingly suspecting whether he had heard wrongly.

King Yu was bewildered as well. He turned his head and looked toward Ji Chengxue, who was standing beside him. Incredulity was swirling deep inside his eyes.

Zhao Musheng's squinted eyes were opened. The elderly Ouyang almost pulled his beard off. The fawning smile on the Minister of Finance's face stiffened and he almost bit his own tongue...

This was a result that no one had expected. No one could imagine that a prince who had always been sent on expeditions outside of the border by the late emperor and had always been disregarded and even disliked would actually be chosen as the successor.

"Hahaha!"

Just when the Main Hall was silent as a grave, a burst of laughter suddenly rang out. The man with a full beard standing next to Ji Chengxue could not help but burst out with laughter.

"What happened to your arrogance from before? Now, all of you know who has the last laugh. Look at that stupefied expression on King Yu's face... Where did his cockiness from before go?" the man with a full beard thought.

He was really delighted as he looked at the constipated expressions on the faces of the crown prince and King Yu. He could

not help but burst out with laughter. Previously, while they were outside of the Gate of Heavenly Mystery, he was really irritated by King Yu's disdainful gaze.

Ji Chengxue was slightly astonished as well. Thereafter, the corners of his mouth curled up as he patted the shoulder of the man with a full beard and softly said, "Stop that, we're still in the Main Hall."

The man with a full beard stopped laughing but the smile on his face could not be wiped away no matter what he did.

Even though Lian Fu was the one who read the posthumous edict aloud, he did not know the contents beforehand. It was only truly made known at that moment, and even he was extremely bewildered. He thought, "I didn't expect... His Majesty to choose the third prince in the end."

Next, Ji Chengxue adjusted his clothes and solemnly went forward to accept the posthumous edict with a respectful expression.

The crown prince furiously snorted and left in a huff with an ashen face.

King Yu gave Ji Chengxue a meaningful glance as well and expressionlessly left.

It was an outcome that nobody expected, causing everyone to be still unable to recover from their surprise. On the imperial court, all of the high-ranking officials were in a somewhat melancholic mood. They had already chosen a side but the chosen successor was not who they chose.

Zhao Musheng had already left. Before leaving, he gave Ji Chengxue a long and hard look. That look was filled with deep meaning.

...

After walking out of the Main Hall and passing through the Gate

of Heavenly Mystery, the same two figures were walking within the swirling snow. Ji Chengxue was somewhat silent for a moment. His mood was already completely different from when they came.

The man with a full beard was laughing with a wide grin on his face and was in high spirits. He was feeling happy for the third prince.

There were very little pedestrians on the entire Long Street. The swirling snow whizzed by and the cold wind rustled.

Clink, clink, clink. Clink, clink, clink.

The clear and melodious sound of bells rang out, echoing within the Long Street. Ji Chengxue and the man with a full beard stopped walking and stood on the spot.

In front of them, five beautiful women whose voluptuous bodies were wrapped in a transparent gauze attire leisurely walked in their direction. Bells were worn around their fair and delicate ankles. As they walked, the bells would produce tinkling sounds. The sound seemed to possess some sort of magical power that aroused the hearts of its listeners.

The man with a full beard stepped forward and stood in front of Ji Chengxue while angrily glaring at them. He took a deep breath and then angrily shouted, "You demonesses from the Joyous Union Sect, get out of our way!"

His voice was like the sound of thunder. It seemed to have turned into an invisible sound wave that crushed the snow that was swirling around them and even overshadowed the sound of the tinkling bells.

Wei Xiangsi and her four companions behind her all stopped walking. As their bodies swayed, pink true energy gushed out from their bodies and turned into a stream of true energy ribbon that floated around them.

"King Yu, that dog! How dare he conspire with the sects to assassinate the successor chosen by the late emperor! Is he planning to revolt!" the man with a full beard angrily roared.

Behind Ji Chengxue and the man with a full beard, the sound of footsteps lightly rang out. Hun Qianyun appeared in a black robe with spirit fire pulsating in his eye sockets.

"If Your Highness had not become the successor, King Yu might really not have dispatched us. If you have to blame something, blame your identity as the successor." Hun Qianyun's hoarse voice rang out and then a surging wave of true energy gushed out of his body and rushed toward Ji Chengxue.

"Kekeke! We're finally going to do something! I've been bored to death!" The Bone King's laughter rang out as he climbed out, appearing on the wall of a building nearby like a gecko.

This was a desperate situation for Ji Chengxue. From the fact that experts from the three great sects of the Heterodox Path that were conspiring with King Yu had brazenly set up an ambush in the middle of the imperial city's Long Street, King Yu was already planning to go out on a limb...

These three parties were not there to chat with Ji Chengxue and were truly intending to kill him. The sharp killing intent swept along with the cold wind was causing goosebumps to rise all over Ji Chengxue's body.

This was a premeditated ambush that targeted him.

The man with a full beard started laughing as his eye became as large as bells and the terrifying aura of a sixth grade Battle-Emperor burst forth from his body.

"You bunch of reckless fools, since you're seeking your own death, I will fulfill all of your wishes! Your Highness, hurry up and go!"

With a shout, his flaxen shirt was suddenly torn into pieces and

his muscles rapidly expanded. His entire body suddenly grew taller and he turned into a giant. The true energy circulating within him was boiling hot and any snowflakes that landed on his skin instantly melted.

His foot suddenly stamped the ground. The accumulated snow on the ground broke into pieces and the tiles fractured and caved in as well. The man with a full beard turned into a blurry figure as he vigorously charged toward Wei Xiangsi and her companions who were blocking the way.

Ji Chengxue's expression was solemn as the tip of his toes brushed against the ground and he swiftly followed behind the man with a full beard.

A punch like the angry bellow of a bull was thrown out, creating a terrifying gale that carried true energy. It directly crushed the stream of true energy that surrounded Wei Xiangsi and her companions and a tremendous force immediately smashed into the five women, triggering girlish squeals.

Thereafter, the man with a full beard turned around with veins bulging all over his body and said, "Your Highness, I'll cover you! Hurry up and go!"

Ji Chengxue began to frown as he gave the man with a full beard a glance and made up his mind in the end. He clenched his teeth before turning around and dashing away.

Hun Qianyun and the others hurriedly dashed forward, wanting to deal with Ji Chengxue. However, the man with a full beard took a step sideways and heavily stamped the ground, seemingly causing the entire ground to shake. He smashed his fists together and overbearingly roared, "Damn, you bunch of good for nothings! If you want to kill His Highness, you'll have to step over my body first!"

Hun Qianyun and the others were furious and immediately attacked him. Surging waves of true energy immediately flew

toward the man with a full beard. Within an instant, he was completely drowned by waves of terrifying true energy.

...

Ji Chengxue's running strides slowed down. In the end, he completely stopped and stood still on the spot. It was not because he did not want to go forward but because a figure was standing there with his hands behind his back, not far away from him.

King Yu slowly turned around and serenely looked toward Ji Chengxue.

"I really didn't anticipate that... father would actually choose you in the end," Ji Chengyu mildly said. His voice was very serene. However, it was this serenity that caused all of the pores on Ji Chengxue's body to shrink and made him feel an unprecedented danger.

Chapter 129: The Future Emperor Is About To Die

As the aura emanating from King Yu continuously rose, his jet-black hair fluttered on its own. Surging waves of true energy was encircling his body and causing the falling snow to be easily dispersed.

The pores on Ji Chengxue's body all widened as he faced the intimidating aura emanating from King Yu. As a fifth grade Battle-King, he was somewhat helpless when facing King Yu who was already a sixth grade Battle-Emperor.

"Do you want to kill me?" Ji Chengxue calmly asked.

King Yu's gaze was cold and emotionless. There was not even the slightest change in his emotion as he expressionlessly looked at Ji Chengxue and said, "I've already reminded you before. I told you not to participate in this mess, otherwise you would pay a price that you wouldn't be able to bear..."

"It's your own fault for not listening."

Ji Chengxue broke into a grin and took off his heavy cloak. A hint of malice appeared on his face that had always been gentle as well. This malice caused him to appear somewhat sinister.

"Ever since we were young, you've always been acting high and mighty. You've always felt as if you're superior than others, right? If you want a fight, then I'll give you one. In any case, we're bound to have a fight sooner or later," Ji Chengxue said with a sneer.

True energy started to float around his body as well as he heavily stamped the ground with his foot, dispersing the snow that had accumulated on the ground.

"Among the three of us, my cultivation level is the highest. How are you going to fight against me?" King Yu broke into a smile and his body instantly charged forward.

Bang bang bang!

As the figures of the two interweaved in a chaotic fight, their clashes resulted in waves of true energy flooding out and affecting the surroundings. Within this freezing cold environment, they were actually having a passionate battle.

However, Ji Chengxue was only a fifth grade Battle-King and there was still a difference in his combat abilities compared to King Yu in the end. A mouthful of boiling bright red blood sprayed into the air as Ji Chengxue's figure continuously backed away and fiercely smashed into a wall, causing the entire wall to collapse.

King Yu coldly smiled as he gathered true energy onto his palm and said, "Goodbye, my brother."

King Yu's gaze was emotionless as he pushed his palm forward in the direction of Ji Chengxue who was lying within the debris. If this attack succeeded, King Yu was confident that Ji Chengxue would be dead without a doubt.

Ji Chengxue was staring at King Yu as a bitter smile appeared on his lips. Even though the saying goes that the royalty have no relatives, he never expected King Yu to be this ruthless.

However, just as King Yu was about to kill Ji Chengxue with the palm strike, an intimidating aura suddenly appeared and caused King Yu's entire body to stiffen. Due to the aura, the true energy gathered in his palm dissipated as well.

A figure approached them while stepping on thin air and stopped between King Yu and Ji Chengxue.

"Xiao Meng?! Are you planning to intervene?" King Yu's pupils constricted and his eyes were filled with incredulity as he stared at the interloper.

"Didn't Xiao Meng say that he wouldn't support any of the princes? Why did he appear at this very moment to save Ji Chengxue?" King Yu thought while feeling somewhat furious. He

knew ever since Xiao Meng appeared that he would not be able to kill Ji Chengxue.

"I am only participating on a personal basis today." Xiao Meng indifferently gave King Yu a glance and said, "After all... I am his brother-in-law."

"You..." King Yu was furious. He thought, "What is this lousy excuse! If you want to rescue Ji Chengxue, then just say it! What's the point of playing a family love card!"

"Chengxue, leave now. I want to have a nice and long chat with King Yu," Xiao Meng said.

Ji Chengxue got up from the ground and gave Xiao Meng a long and hard look as he wiped off the blood from the corner of his mouth. He did not understand why Xiao Meng would appear at this moment.

"Don't worry, your sister is recovering well," Xiao Meng softly said with his back facing Ji Chengxue.

Ji Chengxue was slightly startled and then an ecstatic expression suddenly appeared on his face. Even the injuries on his body were feeling not as painful as before.

Xiao Meng's words revealed a certain information, that his elder sister had awakened from her coma. This might have been the reason why Xiao Meng chose to intervene.

Ji Chengxue was overjoyed as he let out a laugh. He turned around before dashing away and left this place.

King Yu took a step forward and was unable to accept his defeat as he watched Ji Chengxue's departure. However, as he moved, Xiao Meng's gaze landed on him and a heavy aura pressed down upon him, causing his heart to sink.

...

"Elder sister has awakened... that's great! Looks like the

ingredients that Xiao Yue gave to Owner Bu has been successfully turned into an elixir cuisine. As expected of Owner Bu, how formidable!" Ji Chengxue thought. He was holding his chest in pain but feeling extremely delighted.

The person that he was most concerned about was his comatose elder sister. After finding out about Ji Ru'Er's plan, he was even more looking forward to her awakening.

Now that his elder sister had awakened, Ji Chengxue was so happy that he did not even know what to say.

Suddenly, Ji Chengxue was startled. He looked up and saw that the entire sky was filled with swirling snow but not a single snowflake was falling. It was as if there was a glass cloche around him that was isolating him from the snow.

"What's going on?" Ji Chengxue thought as he suddenly felt an ominous feeling. As his gaze slowly lowered, he discovered that there was actually a figure slowly approaching from afar.

Golden rays of light that felt harmonious and warm circulated around Zhao Musheng with every step he took. Each ray of light was as dazzling as a golden lotus blooming.

Ji Chengxue's pupils suddenly constricted. He felt as if his heart was being tightly grasped by an invisible hand and he could not even breathe.

The soft chant of a sutra was resounding in his ears and his field of vision was filled with bright rays of light, as if Buddhist aura was bathing and enveloping Ji Chengxue.

"Zhao Musheng!" Ji Chengxue suddenly bit the tip of his tongue and the metallic taste of blood spread in his mouth. The pain caused him to sober up and see clearly the appearance of the person that was slowly approaching.

Zhao Musheng's amiable-looking face was filled with harmony like a Buddha. A smile was on his lips as he serenely looked at Ji

Chengxue.

"Did the crown prince send you here to kill me?" Ji Chengxue eerily asked.

Zhao Musheng was someone belonging on the side of the crown prince and yet he appeared here at this very moment. The only explanation was that the crown prince had the same objective as King Yu.

A single posthumous edict triggered killing intent from both of his biological brothers. Ji Chengxue felt a surge of anger rise from the bottom of his heart and almost rush out from the top of his head.

Zhao Musheng shook his head and his gaze was still serene as he said, "His Majesty was very intelligent and kept a close eye on me. I thought His Majesty would chose King Yu but you were chosen instead. Nevertheless, it doesn't matter who is chosen... The one who will ascend the throne in the end can only be the crown prince."

"You really are loyal! You're cultivating with methods from the Mahayana Island and yet you're worrying for the empire, don't you feel tired?" Ji Chengxue asked with a sneer.

Zhao Musheng indifferently looked at the sneering Ji Chengxue. He slowly raised his hand and true energy immediately gushed out, forming a golden Buddha statue that emanated a gentle aura in front of him.

Zhao Musheng gently formed a mudra with his hand and then pushed his hand forward. That golden Buddha statue suddenly flew into the sky before slowly descending and enveloped Ji Chengxue.

"Loyalty? If he was ambitious like King Yu, I wouldn't be helping him. I am supporting him exactly because he's weak. Do you... understand?" Zhao Musheng said with a smile.

"I only need an obedient puppet..."

Plop!

After Ji Chengxue heard those words, his body that was enveloped within the Buddha statue suddenly shuddered. He collapsed onto the ground with blood leaking out from his nostrils and mouth and was at death's doorstep.

Zhao Musheng slowly walked toward Ji Chengxue while letting out a sigh filled with compassion.

Suddenly, a feminine shout came from the sky above, and a jade talisman that was radiating bright rays of light came crashing down toward Zhao Musheng.

Buzz!

Zhao Musheng's pupils constricted as he formed a mudra before deftly pushing his hand out and blocked the jade talisman. The jade talisman vibrated for a moment and then released bright flashes of light, forming a simplistic magic array. A dreadful amount of true energy burst out from the magic array and forced Zhao Musheng to take several steps backward.

"The Celestial Arcanum Sect's... Divination Spirit's Array!" Zhao Musheng muttered as his eyes narrowed.

A figure wrapped within a loose robe landed next to Ji Chengxue. With a wave of her fair and slender hand, cracks immediately appeared all over the Buddha statue before shattering it to pieces. Thereafter, she picked up Ji Chengxue with one hand.

"Old man, it's not good to be so ruthless..." After she finished speaking, Ni Yan gave Zhao Musheng a smile before her figure shot out and disappeared.

...

Fang Fang's Little Store.

Bu Fang was curled up on his chair and lightly sipping from a cup

of hot water in his hand. Suddenly, a figure dashed into the store. Ni Yan appeared in front of him and at the same time, threw a bloodied figure onto the floor.

"Owner Bu, this fellow is the future emperor of the Light Wind Empire. However, he's about to die, hurry up and save him."

Chapter 130: I've Always Been Too Softhearted

"What in the world?" Bu Fang thought as he suspiciously gave Ni Yan a glance and then his gaze landed on the figure lying on the ground, who was at death's doorstep. He could not help but be surprised. "Isn't this Ji Chengxue? Why is he in such a miserable state?"

After placing the cup on a table, Bu Fang helped Ji Chengxue up and Ouyang Xiaoyi hurriedly ran over to help as well. They moved Ji Chengxue onto a chair so that he could comfortably lie down.

"What happened?" After performing all of these actions, only then did Bu Fang expressionlessly look toward Ni Yan who was standing at the doorway with a frown.

"What else could have happened? This fellow was ambushed. He was lucky that I was there, otherwise he would already be long dead," Ni Yan said as she gave Ji Chengxue a glance and sympathetically shook her head.

"King Yu brought his little partners from the sects to surround Ji Chengxue, but Ji Chengxue's subordinate protected him and allowed him to escape. As a result, he ran into King Yu and was almost beaten to death. Luckily for him, Xiao Meng's appearance saved him. In the end, he was unlucky enough to run into Zhao Musheng..." Ni Yan briefly narrated Ji Chengxue's ordeal.

The corner of Bu Fang's mouth twitched as he thought, "This Ji Chengxue truly is unlucky. What exactly did he do to incur so much resentment that they want to kill him so much?"

"Just what sort of outrageous deed did he commit?" Bu Fang asked once more as he gave Ji Chengxue a glance, noticing he was bleeding from all of his facial orifices.

At that moment, Ni Yan's expression became strange as well,

seemingly wanting to laugh but being unable to do so. She said, "He didn't do any outrageous deeds. He only snatched the throne from both of his elder brothers that's all. The emperor's posthumous edict had just pronounced him as the successor. Therefore, he's going to be the future emperor of the Light Wind Empire... Of course, the precondition is that he has to survive first."

Bu Fang understood the situation in a flash. When Ji Chengxue, who was originally the least regarded among his brothers, unexpectedly became the successor to the throne, those brothers of his were naturally infuriated from the embarrassment. Without possessing the corresponding strength, he obtained something he should not have. This was the so-called, "Wealth leads to disaster".

"Then why did you bring him here? This is a restaurant, not a hospital," Bu Fang seriously asked as he expressionlessly looked at Ni Yan.

Ni Yan's slightly narrowed and seemingly turned into adorable crescent moons. The corners of her mouth curled up into a smile as she said, "If I send him to a hospital with his injuries, he'll be dead for sure. After getting hit by a secret technique from the Mahayama Island, even a divine doctor would have difficulty in saving him."

"Don't count on saving him with an elixir cuisine. The two types of elixir cuisine that I can cook won't be able to treat his injuries," Bu Fang replied.

Ni Yan attentively stared at Bu Fang as her rosy tongue ran over her delicate lips and she said, "Since the elixir cuisine wouldn't work... Don't you have a spirit herb? Using a seventh grade spirit herb like the Phoenix Blood Herb to treat this sort of injuries should be more than enough.

"Actually, a single section should be enough," Ni Yan said.

Bu Fang broke into a grin. As he had expected, this woman was

aiming for his Phoenix Blood Herb. After coming in contact with the blood of the Ancient Phoenix, the seventh grade spirit herb Phoenix Blood Herb possessed exceptional restorative effects and was indeed the best choice for saving Ji Chengxue at that moment.

However, Bu Fang was feeling somewhat hesitant. His original intention for holding onto the Phoenix Blood Herb was for the sake of brewing a wine that could surpass the "Dragon's Breath". After all, a seventh grade spirit herb was not so easy to find.

"Isn't your objective to obtain the Phoenix Blood Herb? If I were to use the Phoenix Blood Herb to save him, wouldn't you need it anymore?" Bu Fang puzzledly asked.

Ni Yan gave him a bright smile as she pointed at Ji Chengxue and said, "It's rare for me to be able to get away from the sect, so how could my objective be just to obtain the Phoenix Blood Herb? Just use it to save him, I won't feel anguished about it. There's still quite an amount of seventh grade spirit herbs back at our sect."

Bu Fang expressionlessly thought, "You won't feel anguished... but I would."

Bu Fang could not be bothered to say anything else to this woman. His gaze landed on Ji Chengxue who was at death's doorstep. As he looked at this handsome man who was usually gentle and refined but was now on the verge of death, he could not help but let out a sigh.

"I've always been too softhearted," Bu Fang thought with a sigh.

Thereafter, he had Ouyang Xiaoyi look after Ji Chengxue while he headed toward the kitchen. In the end, he could not just watch as someone died in front of him. Even if he was the type of person who disregarded human life, he still had to help as Ji Chengxue was his longtime customer.

He took out the Phoenix Blood Herb from the cupboard. The exquisite and beautiful Phoenix Blood Herb was brownish-red like

it was carved from a Carnelian stone. Due to the preservation functionality of the system's cupboard, it was still lush and filled with spirit energy.

As Bu Fang walked out of the kitchen, the fragrance of the Phoenix Blood Herb instantly spread out and the temperature within the store suddenly rose by quite a lot.

When Ni Yan saw the Phoenix Blood Herb in Bu Fang's hands, her pretty eyes suddenly lit up. It was a seventh spirit herb after all. Despite what she said earlier, even the Celestial Arcanum Sect did not have that many of them in their inventory.

On the tiny little Phoenix Blood Herb, the vibrant fire on its surface was like a phoenix that wished to ascend into the sky. Within the herb, there was an abundant amount of vitality as well as a dreadful destruction energy.

"Feed him with half of the Phoenix Blood Herb is enough. As for whether or not he will survive, it'll depend on his own fortune," Ni Yan reminded. The Phoenix Blood Herb was a seventh grade spirit herb with astonishing curative effects after all. If Ji Chengxue ate the entire herb in his current state, he would not only be unable to recover but would probably immediately explode from the destruction energy contained within the herb.

Bu Fang expressionlessly gave her a glance and nodded. A green wisp of smoke encircled his hand and the Golden Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife appeared. Without any hesitation, he used the knife on the Phoenix Blood Herb.

The cut was extremely smooth and there was not even the slightest drop in the medicinal strength of the Phoenix Blood Herb...

Ni Yan's eyes suddenly lit up brightly. As she stared at the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife in Bu Fang's hands, a violent storm was raging in her heart.

With a wave of his hand, the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife turned back into a wisp of green smoke and dissipated. Bu Fang walked toward Ji Chengxue and pried open his mouth. As he channeled true energy to his palm, a few droplets of juice that had a thick smell of blood immediately dripped down from the Phoenix Blood Herb.

The juice continued to drip until the portion of the Phoenix Blood Herb in Bu Fang's hand finally completely dissolved into blood and fell into Ji Chengxue's mouth.

"This should be fine, right? Hmm... There's still half of the herb left. However, I can't use it as the main ingredient anymore. Looks like I'll have to find another spirit herb that can be used to brew wine," Bu Fang muttered to himself as he stored the remaining half of the Phoenix Blood Herb into the system's storage space.

As Bu Fang turned around to face Ni Yan, he discovered the latter's eyes were filled with slight envy as she stared at his wrist.

"You actually possess a semi-divine tool..."

"Semi-divine tool?" Bu Fang was somewhat puzzled.

Ni Yan looked away with a strange feeling on her mind as she smacked her lips. Semi-divine tools were extremely rare in the Hidden Dragon Continent... Even though the Celestial Arcanum Sect collected information on everything in the world, they did not possess any information on Bu Fang's semi-divine tool.

If the kitchen knife had not turned into a wisp of green smoke and assimilated into the image on Bu Fang's wrist, Ni Yan would really be uncertain about whether that kitchen knife was a semi-divine tool or not.

"Nonetheless... A semi-divine tool that's a kitchen knife?" Ni Yan's expression became even weirder as she thought, "Just which accursed tool-making master with too much time on his hands spent valuable materials to make this?"

"Ah!"

Just when Ni Yan and Bu Fang were both deep in thought, Ji Chengxue, who had consumed half of the Phoenix Blood Herb, suddenly let out a scream and his eyes instantly turned bloodshot as if the fire of a phoenix was blazing underneath his corneas.

The process of rising from the ashes had begun. Whether or not Ji Chengxue would be able to survive would depend on his own willpower.

Bu Fang let out a yawn. After taking a look at the sky, he turned around and drove Ni Yan out. Ouyang Xiaoyi bid her farewell with Bu Fang as well. Thereafter, he placed the door boards back in place and ended the business for the day.

Ji Chengxue continued to incessantly wail and howl in pain inside the store. That sort of heart gouging pain... Bu Fang could not understand.

Therefore, Bu Fang went into the kitchen and practiced making some dishes for a while. After he practiced his cutting and carving techniques and brewed a large vat of Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine, he went upstairs and washed up before going to bed.

It was especially important for him to maintain his sleep. The room's soundproofing was pretty good and he was unable to hear Ji Chengxue's screams. At least, Bu Fang fell soundly asleep after a short while.

Chapter 131: The Emperor's Funeral

The next morning, the sun had just risen when the melodious sound of a bugle horn came from within the imperial palace and was soon followed by the dull and somewhat sorrowful ringing of a bell.

It was as if the slumbering imperial city had woken up at that moment. The lights of each and every household all lit up and many citizens walked out of their houses wearing thick layers of cotton overcoats. While exhaling clouds of white breath, they headed toward the Gate of Heavenly Mystery with their shoulders hunched up and heads tucked in.

On this march toward the Gate of Heavenly Mystery, the citizens were silent and the mood among them was sorrowful.

They were lamenting the ruthlessness of time and mourning the atrophy of life. The regretful demise of a mighty leader was a tremendous loss to the entire Light Wind Empire.

The citizens' reverence toward Emperor Changfeng were from the bottom of their hearts because having an emperor who made great efforts to govern the empire was a blessing to them. They were grateful for the period of prosperity brought by the emperor that allowed them to have a peaceful life.

That was the day of Emperor Changfeng's funeral, so the citizens of the imperial city woke up early in the morning to send him off. There were also many people from outside the imperial city who rushed over just to see the emperor for the last time.

As the sorrowful ringing of the bell created a melancholy mood, more and more people started to gather outside the Gate of Heavenly Mystery. With the soldiers standing guard at the entrance of the Gate of Heavenly Mystery, no one was able to enter. However, the people gathered there did not care. They only needed to wait at the entrance for the coffin carrying the body of

Emperor Changfeng to come out.

Within the plaza of the Gate of Heavenly Mystery, the diligent eunuchs had already cleared a wide path on the ground filled with accumulated snow, for the funeral procession to smoothly travel on.

The crown prince was wearing a mourning garment and was looking toward the Main Hall with a sorrowful expression on his face. There were many civil and military officials standing behind him. They were all wearing white upper garments over their solemn attires to represent their mourning of Emperor Changfeng's demise.

With a solemn expression, King Yu was wearing a mourning garment like the crown prince. Civil and military officials were standing behind him as well, but there were also experts from the sects who were disguising themselves as palace guards. Even they were expressing their respect toward Emperor Changfeng because he was someone who inspired fear in their hearts.

The two groups solemnly stood apart as a group of court musicians wearing mourning garments slowly marched out from the Main Hall while playing a melancholic symphony.

Xiao Meng was wearing a white upper garment over his military attire as he solemnly supported his delicate wife, Ji Ru'Er.

Ji Ru'Er had an extremely complicated expression on her face as tears welled up in her eyes. After falling into a deep sleep for three years, she woke up only to find that her father had passed away.

Nevertheless, Ji Ru'Er was looking around her surroundings. She was looking for Ji Chengxue's figure but she soon realized that Ji Chengxue was not within the spacious plaza of the Gate of Heavenly Mystery...

"Where's Chengxue? Why isn't he here yet?" Ji Ru'Er used her frail voice to ask Xiao Meng.

Xiao Meng was filled with suspicion as well. Ji Chengxue should have successfully gotten out of danger the day before. How could he not appear on such an important day?

As the successor named in the posthumous edict, Ji Chengxue should be behaving even more zealous!

"Could something have happened?" Xiao Meng thought as his eyes flashed with uncertainty. However, he still forced out a smile and said, "It's fine, Chengxue might have been delayed by an important matter. He'll come soon enough. After all... he's the successor to the throne."

Even though Ji Ru'Er was still feeling somewhat uneasy, Xiao Meng's gentle smile influenced her and the corners of her mouth slightly curled up as she nodded.

Xiao Yanyu and Xiao Xiaolong were standing behind them and were feeling extremely happy as they watched the loving affection between their parents.

Xiao Yanyu was looking around but she was unable to find that familiar figure... According to her father's narration, the one who woke up their mother was their elder brother, Xiao Yue.

Furthermore, their mother had already revealed the truth of the entire matter to Xiao Yanyu and Xiao Xiaolong. Their resentment toward Xiao Yue was already long gone and had all turned into guilt.

As the court musicians marched out from the Main Hall, Lian Fu, wearing a white mourning garment, slowly walked out after them with a haggard face and his hair hanging loosely.

Lian Fu looked extremely exhausted. His eyebags were drooping and his eyes were bloodshot. The aura emanating from his body was also somewhat unstable.

However, no one minded. Perhaps he was exceedingly depressed.

Afterall, Lian Fu had a close relationship with Emperor

Changfeng.

"Where's the third prince?" Lian Fu asked with a high-pitched voice as he lightly waved his horsetail whisk.

Yet, no one replied him. Instead, the crown prince and King Yu both stepped forward at the same time and performed a fist and palm salute toward Lian Fu.

Lian Fu gave the two of them a meaningful glance and then began carrying out some pre-burial ceremonies. These strict and solemn ceremonies were passed down throughout the generations of the Light Wind Empire's imperial family. Every single prince must follow them.

"Next, would the successor of the throne receive the coffin," Lian said as he waved his horsetail whisk once more.

However, after those words were spoken, the civil and military officials down below began whispering to each other.

The corners of Zhao Musheng's mouth curled up as he stood there in a calm and collected manner.

King Yu and the crown prince stepped forward once more. King Yu opened his mouth and said, "Chief Eunuch Lian, we can't miss the [auspicious timing](#). Just let me be the one to receive the coffin."

auspicious timing (时辰) - 时辰 (Shíchén) literally means time/hour of a day. However, when "time" is mentioned in such an occasion, people are usually referring to the "auspicious timing". When it comes to important occasions like one's wedding or burial, a person's eight characters are used to determine the "auspicious date"(吉日), which also includes the hour.

"Why should you be the one to do it? If anyone is going to receive the coffin... it should be me," the crown prince said as he gave King Yu a cold glance.

The tension between the two became intense once more.

Lian Fu let out a soft sigh. The two princes were simply being too obvious with their attitude. From the fact that the third prince was not around, chances were high that he suffered a mishap. Otherwise, King Yu and the crown prince would not have stepped forward in such a sincere manner and fought over the chance to receive the coffin.

However, in this situation, one person must go forward and receive the coffin. Lian Fu was feeling somewhat troubled as well.

"Chief Eunuch Lian, you should make the decision... Father trusted you the most when he was still around," King Yu said as his gaze landed on Lian Fu.

"Your Highnesses, please be careful with your words. Receiving the coffin is too important to be casually decided. Let's wait a while more. If the third prince still haven't arrived by then, Your Highnesses will receive the coffin together," Lian Fu said.

King Yu stared blankly for a moment and then let out a chuckle. Ji Chengxue was definitely not going to come. There was no point in waiting, it was only a waste of time. Even though that was what King Yu was thinking, he still had to put up a show.

The crown prince was thinking the same way as well. The two of them looked each other in the eye and then looked away.

As time passed, the civil and military officials below were soon getting impatient and their whispers could be heard from time to time.

Lian Fu gave them a glance before looking away and sighing in his mind.

"Chief Eunuch Lian, third brother still hasn't arrived. This is a great disrespect toward father. How could such a person succeed the throne? The important task of receiving the coffin should be left to me," the crown prince said as he opened his mouth once more.

Not to be outdone, King Yu argued back as well.

However, while they were still arguing, the corners of Lian Fu's mouth suddenly curled up as he looked into the distance. At the entrance of the Gate of Heavenly Mystery, there were two figures slowly approaching.

"My dearest elder brothers, I am truly sorry for worrying the two of you. The task of receiving the coffin should still be left to me. After all... I am the true successor to the throne."

A cold voice came from afar and suddenly resounded within the ears of the crown prince and King Yu like the sound of thunder, giving them an incredulous feeling.

Zhao Musheng's pupils constricted. He was feeling somewhat puzzled as he stared closely at Ji Chengxue.

Xiao Yue was following behind Ji Chengxue with a solemn expression. They were both wearing mourning garments as they walked step by step toward the Main Hall.

Soon, Ji Chengxue arrived before Lian Fu. He gently nodded toward Lian Fu and then looked toward the crown prince and King Yu.

"I am not dead yet... Are the two of you feeling surprised?"

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[1] auspicious timing (时辰) - 时辰 (Shíchén) literally means time/hour of a day. However, when "time" is mentioned in such an occasion, people are usually referring to the "auspicious timing". When it comes to important occasions like one's wedding or burial, a person's eight characters are used to determine the "auspicious date"(吉日), which also includes the hour.

Chapter 132: The Sects Are Trying to Create Trouble

When Bu Fang got up from bed and arrived in the kitchen, Ji Chengxue had already left. After swallowing half of the Phoenix Blood Herb, he managed to overcome death and survived. Bu Fang was glad that the herb was not wasted.

The melodious ringing of a bell with a touch of sorrow and melancholy came through the window. That was when Bu Fang remembered that today seemed to be the day of the old emperor's funeral.

After hesitating for a moment, Bu Fang finally decided to head toward the Gate of Heavenly Mystery to have a look. After all, he had a pretty good impression of the old emperor. He was not only a good emperor but also a gluttonous one.

After deep-frying two Oyster Pancakes for breakfast, Bu Fang put on a fur overcoat and walked out of the store. He hung a sign on one of the boards at the door and then headed toward the Gate of Heavenly Mystery.

Heavy snow was still falling from the sky in a graceful manner, like a beautiful painting.

Bu Fang took out a steaming Oyster Pancake and blew on it before taking a bite. As his teeth broke through its crispy crust, a rich fragrance spread into the surroundings and made him feel even hungrier.

Bu Fang ate the Oyster Pancake as he walked along and soon reached the entrance of the Gate of Heavenly Mystery. A long queue had already formed and many of the citizens were standing on tiptoes, hoping to catch a glimpse of the scene inside the plaza.

Bu Fang was not in a rush at all, so he joined the back of the queue. As he took a bite of the Oyster Pancake, the delicious smell

was spreading into the surroundings and caused some of the citizens to focus on him.

"What is this smell... It's simply too fragrant!"

The gaze of the citizens were filled with yearning as they stared at the Oyster Pancake in Bu Fang's hand. Many of them were subconsciously attempting to lick the fragrance as their tongues ran over their lips. However, they only tasted the cold winter air.

Chomp... Bu Fang took another bite of the Oyster Pancake and expressionlessly chewed the morsel in his mouth. The people nearby were all furious. What kind of monster would eat something so fragrant early in the morning? Was he attempting to draw aggro?

Therefore, everyone around Bu Fang moved away from him and a large space soon appeared. No one wanted to get too close to Bu Fang to avoid the torture of enduring the fragrance.

Bu Fang expressionlessly scanned the crowd around him. He was somewhat perplexed as he thought, "What are these people doing?"

Since there was space in front of him, Bu Fang naturally moved forward. The moment he moved, the people around him moved away from him again. In the end, Bu Fang effortlessly reached the entrance to the Gate of Heavenly Mystery, an exceptional viewing position.

"Hmm? He left so fast, so this is where he ran off to," Bu Fang thought as he took a bite of the Oyster Pancake and watched the confrontation between the three princes in front of the Main Hall.

Ji Chengxue's temperament had completely changed. After all, he survived a life and death situation which caused a huge change in his mental state. Previously, whenever he faced his elder brothers, he would behave in a somewhat timid manner. However, he was now calm and composed. Furthermore, his gaze even slightly intimidated them.

"I am the successor. I'll receive the coffin," Ji Chengxue mockingly said as he gave them a glance.

The crown prince and King Yu were both stunned for a moment and then angrily stared at Ji Chengxue... This brat actually became so arrogant!

Lian Fu nodded. He led Ji Chengxue into the Main Hall and then began the ceremony of receiving the coffin. The ceremony itself was actually not that complicated and was finished after a short while.

Up till now, receiving the coffin was the real start of the funeral.

The so-called receiving the coffin was a tradition passed down throughout the generations of the Light Wind Empire's imperial family. The successor would lead the funeral procession and once the coffin passed through the Gate of Heavenly Mystery, it signified that the person who received the coffin had received the approval of the deceased. This was the official succession ceremony of the throne.

This was also the reason why the crown prince and King Yu were fighting over the role of receiving the coffin.

The court musicians started playing a symphony once more. Deep within the Main Hall, eight brawny Battle-Kings who were topless slowly walked out while carrying a gigantic bronze coffin.

Their steps were extremely firm. With every step, they were causing the accumulated snow on the ground to tremble.

The coffin was made entirely from bronze and there were many mysterious and strange images engraved upon its surface. There were ancient divine beasts, exotic flowers, and all kinds of written symbols...

Ji Chengxue solemnly walked in front of the eight Battle-Kings that were carrying the coffin. His expression was solemn and respectful with a trace of severity.

With each step, white gas would gush out from the nostrils of the eight Battle-Kings. Each and every steps was firm and slow, but it was as if they were stepping on the hearts of everyone.

The scene of the eight Battle-Kings carrying the coffin while walking on the plaza of the Gate of Heavenly Mystery made the spectators hold their breaths. The snow drifting down from the sky had almost stopped and the mood became extremely heavy.

Zhao Musheng narrowed his eyes at the bronze coffin and a vague light seemed to be circulating in his eyes. Even a great emperor had to rest six feet under in the end. How sorrowful it must be for an emperor that ruled over a generation.

As the funeral procession reached the middle of the Gate of Heavenly Mystery, the sound of true energy surging rang out within the plaza.

King Yu's expression was frosty as he coldly stared at Ji Chengxue, who was leading the procession, and indifferently said, "If you're going to sit on the throne, I am the first one that's against it..."

Boom boom boom!

King Yu's voice was not loud but it resounded within the plaza of the Gate of Heavenly Mystery. Behind him, several waves of auras surged out and multiple figures charged toward Ji Chengxue.

"How dare you!" Lian Fu furiously shouted in a voice like thunder as he stepped forward and swung his horsetail whisk.

With a bright burst of light and flashes of darkness, an extremely large simulacrum of the King of Hell suddenly appeared in the middle of the Gate of Heavenly Mystery. Spirit fire pulsed within Hun Qianyun's eyes as he endowed the power from the simulacrum on himself and his aura instantly rose. He threw a punch at Lian Fu who was charging toward him.

The collision of the two instantly created a tremendous energy

shockwave. However, beyond everyone's expectations, Lian Fu's figure actually shuddered before being thrown backward while vomiting blood, and his aura plummeted.

"This is unlike Lian Fu's usual strength at all..." Xiao Meng thought as his eyebrows knitted together. Seeing that Hun Qianyun was aiming to kill Lian Fu, he could not sit and watch any longer. As his aura spread out, he stepped out as well, to obstruct Hun Qianyun.

A burst of coquettish laughter rang out as five women from the Joyous Union Sect attacked together. Their target was... Ji Chengxue.

On the other hand, the experts from the White Bone Palace targeted the eight Battle-Kings that were carrying the coffin.

King Yu's gaze turned cold as he coldly shouted, "Do not damage the coffin!"

King Yu's objective was obtaining the throne. Emperor Changfeng was his father after all. He was unwilling to do something like destroying his father's coffin.

However, the members of the White Bone Palace did not respond to his shout. This time, his expression completely changed.

"Kekeke! Emperor Changfeng destroyed countless sects throughout his life and the spoils of war he has accumulated is also innumerable. Even though I was standing far away, I could still feel the aura of the Death Soul Palace's semi-divine tool within this coffin... A semi-divine tool as a funerary object, as expected of a legendary emperor!"

The White Bone Palace's Bone King started to sneer as his gaze suddenly became fierce and the subordinates next to him all exploded. The bones that came from their bodies combined together into a gigantic white skeleton.

The aura of the skeleton was powerful and actually reached the

level of a seventh grade Battle-Saint.

Chapter 133: The Emperor's Scheme, the Double Calamity Dragon Head Array

"Stop what you're doing!" King Yu was furious! These people from the sects actually disobeyed his order!

However, the seventh grade skeleton made of the experts from the White Bone Palace completely ignored King Yu's shouts and its skeletal hand reached out for the coffin. The hollow eye sockets of the skeleton were filled with greed and yearning.

The eight Battle-Kings that were carrying the coffin were unable to endure the aura of a seventh grade Battle-Saint and their faces suddenly went red as they fell on one knee. The bronze coffin that they were carrying dropped onto the ground with a loud noise as well.

Don!

A dull and heavy sound resounded within the entire Gate of Heavenly Mystery. Everyone's action stopped as they subconsciously looked toward the fallen coffin.

" The coffin touched the ground... The funeral is ruined?! "

The same thought flashed across everyone's mind and they could not help but have a somewhat mixed feeling. He was an outstanding emperor and yet his funeral was wrecked in the end.

King Yu's pupils constricted as anger welled up in his heart. True energy violently surged within his body as he angrily stared at that gigantic skeleton.

The aura emanating from Ji Chengxue became even stronger than before. With the help of the Phoenix Blood Herb, his cultivation level had already reached sixth grade Battle-Emperor. This was an unexpected surprise for him.

After forcing back the five women from the Joyous Union Sect

with a palm strike, Ji Chengxue's expression was frosty as he shouted, "You impudent rebels!"

The gigantic skeleton was startled for a moment and then became overjoyed. With a wave of its hand, it released a powerful wave of aura that swept the eight Battle-Kings to one side.

With a single step forward, it reached the bronze coffin. Its gaze was burning with desire as it stared at the bronze coffin and its skeletal arms were even somewhat trembling.

Within the coffin, it could feel the faint aura of something that it was longing for, the Death Soul Palace's semi-divine tool... the Departed Soul Orb!

Even though the White Bone Palace was on the same level as the Death Soul Palace, they did not possess a semi-divine tool. This had always been a thorn in their flesh. After the Death Soul Palace was destroyed in one go by Xiao Meng, their semi-divine tool was brought back to the imperial city as well.

The Departed Soul Orb had the functionality of appeasing souls and even prevent decomposition. It was the best funerary object.

Since Emperor Changfeng had obtained the Departed Soul Orb, it would definitely be used as a funerary object.

Xiao Meng was fighting a distance away with a sullen expression on his face. The simulacrum of the King of Hell being controlled by Hun Qianyun before him was rather powerful, so even he would need some time in order to deal with it. He watched as the gigantic skeleton was about to touch the coffin and the coldness in his eyes became even stronger.

A loud clang rang out.

A ray of light emanating from a sword seemed to have poured down from the highest point in the sky as it rapidly flew toward the gigantic skeleton and reached its target in a flash.

With a battle cry, a simulacrum of a phoenix appeared to be

hovering over Ji Chengxue as he dashed forward and threw a punch toward the gigantic skeleton.

Both Xiao Yue and Ji Chengxue made their moves at the same time and utilized their strongest attacks in order to force back the gigantic skeleton.

"Hmph! How foolish!"

The gigantic skeleton stopped moving and then turned around. Its body suddenly trembled and countless amount of bone spears flew out, thrusting toward Ji Chengxue and Xiao Yue.

The sky-rending attack by Xiao Yue was blocked. He was only a sixth grade Battle-Emperor after all. He could only land on the ground.

Ji Chengxue smashed a single bone spear into pieces with his punch and landed on the ground as well. With the difference in their cultivation level, there was no chance for them to get any closer.

Bang!

The gigantic skeleton eerily smiled and then fiercely struck the coffin with its palm. Utilizing a tremendous force, it tried to pry open the coffin.

However, it soon discovered that something was wrong. Despite using all of its strength, it could not lift the coffin's lid by even a single inch!

"There's something wrong with the coffin!" Ghost fire pulsated within the eye sockets of the gigantic skeleton.

Standing a distance away, Zhao Musheng was frowning as well as he attentively stared at the coffin. Thereafter, his pupils suddenly constricted...

The lid of the coffin moved!

As everyone watched in astonishment, the coffin's lid slowly

opened on its own. The eerie sound of the lid grinding against the walls of the coffin raised goosebumps all over everyone's body.

Everyone fighting within the plaza stopped moving as they looked toward the coffin in amazement.

Lian Fu's high-pitched laughter sounded out. As blood dripped from his mouth, he pinched his thumb and middle finger together and swept his gaze over the plaza. With a pause between each word, he said, "Rebels from the sects... All of you must die!"

As he finished speaking, a figure sat up within the coffin and a dreadful wave of aura surged out.

"What?!"

The gigantic skeleton was the closest to the coffin and suddenly felt a surging wave of aura rushing from it. It was a type of imposing aura that belonged to a ruler. It was both supreme and inviolable.

The gigantic skeleton was immediately thrown backward by the aura and directly disintegrated in mid air into chunks of bones. Its fusion technique was actually dispelled.

Zhao Musheng sucked in a breath of cold air as he stared at the figure sitting within the coffin. He thought, "Ji Changfeng... is not dead?"

"Hmm? That's wrong! There's no sign of life in this figure at all... He should be dead, but what's going on with this surging wave of energy? Furthermore... This energy is flowing into the surroundings..." Zhao Musheng muttered and then he seemed to have thought of something as his face instantly went pale. He thought, " Ji Changfeng... What an amazing plan! "

The entire Gate of Heavenly Mystery suddenly shook as the snow melted and evaporated. The stone pillar covered under a layer of snow emitted a burst of multicolored light and profound veined patterns appeared on its surface.

Everyone present was somewhat perplexed. What was going on?

"The Double Calamity Dragon Head Array... Ji Changfeng actually activated this magic array! The old man's prediction was actually right!" Ni Yan exclaimed as she watched the scene unfold while standing in mid air outside of the Gate of Heavenly Mystery.

Her primary objective for coming to the imperial city was actually for the sake of this Double Calamity Dragon Head Array, the magic array used for protecting the Light Wind Empire. When the empire was first established, the first emperor of the Light Wind Empire once depended on this magic array to eliminate over a dozen seventh grade Battle-Saints. It was a dreadful magic array that made countless sects tremble with fear.

Its fearsome might was even comparable to an eighth grade War-God!

Within the records of the Celestial Arcanum Sect, this Double Calamity Dragon Head Array could be ranked within the top five among the magic arrays.

Ni Yan was tasked by the sect leader of the Celestial Arcanum Sect to record down this Double Calamity Dragon Head Array...

With a flip of her hand, multiple jade talismans were suddenly tossed into the air. As she infused her true energy into these jade talismans, they started trembling with a rustling noise.

The jade talismans shone brightly and formed a gigantic eyeball above Ni Yan's head. That eyeball silently observed and recorded everything within the Gate of Heavenly Mystery.

Suddenly, Ni Yan's eyes became blank for a moment and she puzzledly looked toward the entrance of the Gate of Heavenly Mystery.

A slender figure suddenly entered the Gate of Heavenly and slowly headed into the battlefield.

"Owner Bu? Is he insane? There's a battle going on... What's a

chef doing here?"

Rays of light soared into the sky from underneath the tiles within the Gate of Heavenly Mystery. The lights gathered in mid air and then spread in all directions, forming a gigantic energy barrier over the entire place.

The two stone pillars seemed to have come alive as they each shot out a pitch-black chain toward the bronze coffin. The chains coiled around the coffin and suspended the coffin in mid air.

Thereafter, an endless amount of energy formed a vast magic array with the coffin acting as the center.

With a draconic roar, a gigantic simulacrum of a divine dragon flew out from the magic array and proudly hovered above the Gate of Heavenly Mystery. Energy continuously leaked out from its slightly open mouth.

"I've been conquering sects for so many years and countless amount of experts have died in my hands. How could you dare to dishonor me on my funeral? Even if I have fallen, I am still not someone the likes of you can humiliate. Therefore, all of the sect rebels within the Gate of Heavenly Mystery must die."

Chapter 134: King Yu's Three Crimes!

"Abrupt Mission Suggestion: obtain the Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit from the emperor's funerary objects. This is a seventh grade spirit fruit which has three stripes on it that emits three different types of fragrance at the same time. This is an excellent ingredient for brewing wine. The system recommends this as an alternative main ingredient."

Bu Fang was standing at the entrance to the Gate of Heavenly Mystery. As he took a bite of the crispy Oyster Pancake, the large and plump oyster entered his mouth and he almost swallowed his own tongue from the delicious taste. Once he finally shoved the last piece of Oyster Pancake into his mouth, the solemn voice of the system resounded within his mind.

Bu Fang was immediately startled for a moment. He had to obtain the old emperor's funerary object, the Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit? Furthermore, the system recommended it as an ingredient for wine brewing?

The system's sudden announcement was completely outside of Bu Fang's expectations. Based on its contents, the system was making a suggestion using the abrupt mission.

According to Ni Yan, Dragon's Breath used over a hundred types of spirit herbs and they underwent special preparation methods before brewing. The steps of the methods were onerous and its ingredients were extravagant. It was already completely incomparable to ordinary wine. If Bu Fang wanted to brew a better wine than Dragon's Breath, he definitely had to use ingredients and brewing techniques that were more superior.

If Bu Fang had to search for the ingredients on his own, he really would be uncertain on how to proceed. The system's sudden suggestion was a boon for Bu Fang.

"As expected of the system that's assisting me to become the God

of Cooking, it's so considerate and so perfect," Bu Fang thought.

As Bu Fang broke into a grin, a resonant draconic roar came from the Gate of Heavenly Mystery. An enormous simulacrum of a divine dragon nearly obscured the sky and almost filled Bu Fang's entire field of vision.

"System... Do I really have to go? I have a feeling that it's dangerous inside," Bu Fang expressionlessly asked the system.

"Young man, as someone aiming to become the God of Cooking, how could you show any fear on the path toward obtaining ingredients! For the sake of the ingredient, march on!" the system seriously encouraged him.

Bu Fang was speechless.

...

"All sect rebels... must die!"

The emperor's imposing voice resounded within the Gate of Heavenly Mystery and sounded deafening in the ears of everyone present. It was as if thunder had fallen from the sky and suddenly exploded.

The divine dragon simulacrum opened its mouth and actually spoke in the emperor's voice.

Hiss!

Everyone sucked in a breath of cold air and their faces were filled with incredulity. The emperor had fallen, this was a fact. However, he used an unconventional method to come back to life. With the help from the ancient magic array within the Gate of Heavenly Mystery, he turned his consciousness into the spirit of the magic array!

As the spirit of the magic array, the emperor had absolute control over the Double Calamity Dragon Head Array!

Simply put, the current emperor possessed the dreadful might of

the Double Calamity Dragon Head Array.

The astonishment on Zhao Musheng's face slowly faded as a hint of a smile appeared on his lips. He thought, "As expected of Emperor Changfeng, I've indeed underestimated him.

"However, does he really think he could wipe out all of the experts from the sects by relying on the Double Calamity Dragon Head Array? In its current state, it's only a shadow of its former self."

"Father... Is that really you?!" Ji Chengxue looked up and stared blankly at Ji Changfeng who had turned into the divine dragon simulacrum. He had a weird feeling as he listened to the familiar voice coming from the simulacrum's mouth.

"I now pronounce you as my successor. I hope you won't disappoint me," the divine dragon simulacrum indifferently said with an aloof and remote attitude that disregarded all living things.

Ji Chengxue took a deep breath and solemnly nodded.

"Why!? Father, why is he the one!"

An angry voice filled with bitterness came from a distance away. A malevolent expression as well as intense resentment appeared on King Yu's face as he questioned the divine dragon simulacrum.

He was unable to understand. He was mystified. He was unable to accept the decision! What was his father's basis for choosing Ji Chengxue, who had the least sense of presence among them, as the successor.

A bitter expression appeared on the crown prince's face as well. However, he did not ask, or to be more exact, he did not dare to ask. The current Ji Changfeng was no longer the sickly Ji Changfeng but rather the Emperor Changfeng who had turned into a divine dragon simulacrum. Within the magic array, Emperor Changfeng could take their lives with a single thought.

The divine dragon finally moved. As its enormous body swayed around, it sounded like claps of thunder. The gigantic head of the dragon turned and the dragon's eyes indifferently gave King Yu a glance before opening its mouth.

"Did I give you permission to question my decision?"

The extremely overbearing words immediately made King Yu feel as if cold water was poured upon him. His pupils constricted as an immense aura that seemed to have fallen from the sky suddenly landed on him and made him fall upon his knees.

"Conspiring with rebels from the sects is your first crime. Disrespecting me is your second crime. Attempting to murder your brother is your third crime. These three crimes will be punished together. I shall seal your cultivation level and abolish your kingship. You shall guard the imperial mausoleum for three years. Within three years, you're forbidden from stepping out of the imperial mausoleum," the divine dragon simulacrum indifferently said while hovering in the sky.

The body of King Yu who was kneeling on the ground suddenly shuddered. He raised his head with a belligerent expression on his face and angrily roared in a cracked voice, "Why!"

"King Yu!" the women from the Joyous Union Sect cried out in alarm. A distance away, the aura of Hun Qianyun suddenly trembled and his mind was filled with incredulity.

"Sealing his cultivation, abolishing his kingship, and sentencing him to guard the imperial mausoleum for three years. Isn't that equivalent to imprisonment? If this really is going to be his sentencing, King Yu would be completely ruined..."

King Yu's enraged roar and frustration resounded within the Gate of Heavenly Mystery. His voice was almost gone and his eyes were bloodshot. With his personality, it was impossible for him to accept such an end!

"Attack! Attack! Slay this dragon! I, Ji Chengyu, will not resign myself to such fate!"

Ji Chengyu started shouting. The members from the sects who stood a distance away were all somewhat hesitating.

"Hun Qianyun, did you forget what I promised you? If I don't become the emperor, none of my promises will be fulfilled!" Ji Chengyu yelled.

The eyes of Wei Xiangsi and Hun Qianyun as well as the Bone King who had just gotten up from the ground were all gleaming. They were all somewhat indecisive. In the end, they all clenched their teeth as if they made a huge decision.

Boom boom boom!

The King of Hell simulacrum appeared and Hun Qianyun's aura dramatically rose.

While shaking the Joyous Union Bells, the five women formed a strange magic array and were emanating a powerful aura.

With an eerie laughter, the Bone King turned into a malevolent skeleton once more.

Three figures whose cultivation levels were not inferior to a seventh grade Battle-Saint rose into the air and charged toward the divine dragon simulacrum.

Xiao Meng could not help but suck in a breath of cold air. Even he felt that he would definitely be severely injured if he was the one facing their combined attack.

After all, this was equivalent to the combined attack of three Battle-Saints at the same time. The power of the attack was simply too terrifying.

However, as a draconic roar sounded out, everyone subconsciously covered their ears. A squall arose and an enormous golden dragon claw suddenly descended from the sky.

The dragon claw was emanating an alarming aura as it headed directly for the members of the sects.

"Rebels from the sects, I haven't gotten even with you yet... and you still dare to intervene. Fine, it's time for you to die."

As a draconic roar sounded out, the members of the sects were smashed into the ground by the dragon claw. The entire Gate of Heavenly Mystery intensely trembled as if an earthquake was occurring.

After a long while, the cloud of dust dissipated and revealed the scene of the aftermath.

Everyone including Zhao Musheng felt a chill go up their spine. Their eyes were filled with incredulity as they fearfully looked at the divine dragon simulacrum.

King Yu was shocked and a hint of terror gradually appeared in his eyes.

Before his eyes, the experts from the Three Great Heterodox Sects were smashed into minced meat by the claw of the divine dragon simulacrum... They were completely beyond recognition.

The five enchanting beauties from the Joyous Union Sect; Hun Qianyun, the head elder of the Soul Sect; and the skeleton, Bone King, were all turned into a pile of minced meat on the ground.

As the eyes of the divine dragon simulacrum fell upon Ji Chengyu once more, an indifferent voice rang out.

"Do you still refuse to comply?"

Chapter 135: Umm... I Am Just Passing Through

Ni Yan was standing in mid air outside the Gate of Heavenly Mystery. As she saw the divine dragon simulacrum crush the combined attack of three experts from the Heterodox sects whose cultivation levels were equivalent to seventh grade Battle-Saints, she could not help but suck in a breath of cold air. She thought, "As expected of the magic array that even our sect leader is concerned about, the capability of this Double Calamity Dragon Head Array is indeed formidable."

The enormous eyeball that was formed with jade talismans was hovering above her head and recording the battle going on in the Gate of Heavenly Mystery. In truth, she was more curious about Bu Fang who was inconspicuously loitering inside.

She was very curious about Bu Fang's aim.

However, Bu Fang had not done anything yet, so Ni Yan stopped paying attention to him and diverted all of her attention toward the divine dragon simulacrum.

The fact that the emperor had fused his consciousness with the divine dragon simulacrum could be considered resurrecting himself. However, strictly speaking, he was still deceased. Turning himself into the spirit of the magic array was just a temporary measure and he would eventually disappear. However, before dissipating, Ji Changfeng was going to eliminate all hidden troubles. Maybe this was something that he had been planning for a long time.

King Yu was kneeling on the ground. His bitterness was already long gone when that catastrophic dragon claw descended. When faced with such power, King Yu could only admit defeat.

Buzz!

King Yu's pupils constricted as a stream of true energy flowed into his body. He felt this foreign true energy that occupied the space above his dantian had suppressed the true energy throughout his body and the circulation had completely stopped. Emperor Changfeng had really sealed his cultivation level.

As the eyes of the divine dragon simulacrum turned toward the crown prince, his body suddenly shuddered and he was extremely frightened.

The divine dragon simulacrum stared at crown prince for a long while and then let out a sigh. Without saying anything, it turned its gaze away...

Everyone was surprised and the crown prince himself was stunned as well. "This... What's the meaning of this? Why didn't father say anything?" The crown prince was infuriated... However, he did not dare to say anything, so his expression became somewhat comical.

Suddenly, Zhao Musheng who had been standing next to the crown prince all this time made his move. As overwhelming true energy emanated from him, brilliant rays of golden light appeared around his body.

The divine dragon simulacrum turned toward him. With a draconic roar, a finely detailed dragon claw descended toward Zhao Musheng.

"Ji Changfeng... I've underestimated you. I didn't anticipate that you would actually choose to become the spirit of this magic array in order to activate it. However, with your current state, you wouldn't be able to maintain it for long..." With a carefree smile and his hands held behind his back, Zhao Musheng arrived before the divine dragon simulacrum within an instant.

He raised his hand and the aura of a seventh grade Battle-Saint instantly spread out and a Buddhist aura radiated around him, as if a golden lotus was blooming. He formed a mudra with his hand

and pushed forward, aiming for the divine dragon simulacrum.

As the dragon claw and the mudra collided together, an earthshaking explosion rang out and Zhao Musheng stumbled several steps backward in the air.

On the other hand, the divine dragon simulacrum became slightly dimmer and the coffin that was wrapped in chains shook a little.

Zhao Musheng's eyes lit up. As he had expected, Ji Changfeng's Double Calamity Dragon Head Array was not the complete version. Thereafter, he took a step forward with a laugh. He appeared at the abdomen area of the simulacrum and ruthlessly threw out a palm strike, causing the divine dragon simulacrum to flicker for a moment.

"This is not the complete version of the Double Calamity Dragon Head Array after all!" Zhao Musheng said with a sneer and then spat out the essence of his blood. As he exerted all of his strength, he actually pierced through the divine dragon simulacrum. With an earthshaking draconic roar, the divine dragon simulacrum shattered with a loud noise.

At the same time, the coffin that was wrapped in chains fell onto the ground and produced a loud thud.

Within the coffin, the aura emanating from Emperor Changfeng who was sitting upright slowly subsided and then the corpse peacefully lay back down.

Zhao Musheng's body swayed for a moment and his expression became somewhat pale as well. Even though he exploited a gap and the Double Calamity Dragon Head Array itself was originally not going to last long, he still received a considerable backlash.

However, there was not even the slightest concern about his own injuries on Zhao Musheng's face. On the contrary, he was excitedly staring at the bronze coffin.

As he formed a mudra with his hand and exerted his will, three dots of bright lights flew out from the coffin.

The light faded away and revealed the appearance of the three objects: a dazzling Śarīra, an aromatic fruit with three cloud-like patterns on its round surface, and a pitch-black stone.

These three items were things that Zhao Musheng had desired for a long time. The Śarīra was an extremely precious relic left by an expert from the Mahayana Island after he passed away, while the pitch-black stone was the Death Soul Palace's semi-divine weapon, the Departed Soul Orb.

As for the fruit, it was an extremely valuable seventh grade spirit fruit, the Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit. If someone consumed this fruit, he would have a high chance of achieving enlightenment.

In order for Ji Changfeng to activate the Double Calamity Dragon Head Array, he had to rely on numerous treasures to provide sufficient energy. Among the many treasures, Zhao Musheng was only interested in these three objects.

Originally, Zhao Musheng was planning to help the crown prince become the emperor and control him from behind the scenes. However, with Ji Changfeng's interference, all of his plans were ruined. King Yu was demoted and the third prince after obtaining Xiao Meng's support was not someone the crown prince could defeat. Therefore, in simple terms, the conclusion was already foregone.

"Since there's no turning back, I might as well forsake all pretense and obtain some benefits before returning. At the very least... I have to bring the Śarīra." That was what Zhao Musheng thought.

As Zhao Musheng held the Śarīra in his hand, his eyes became even more benevolent as a warm feeling enveloped his body.

King Yu lost and the crown prince had lost all chances of winning. In the end, the third prince was the winner of this fight over the throne.

The magic array that had encompassed the entire Gate of Heavenly Mystery gradually dissipated and its lights faded away. Snow began to voluminously descend from the sky once more.

"Do you really think you could leave just like that?" Xiao Meng said as he looked at Zhao Musheng, who was about to leave. Zhao Musheng's identity was already revealed. Evidently, he was not only an expert from the sects, but also an extremely powerful expert from Mahayana Island.

However, even if he was an expert from the Mahayana Island, Xiao Meng would never allow him to leave so easily...

"You won't be able to stop me..." Zhao Musheng said as he serenely looked at Xiao Meng.

The corners of Xiao Meng's mouth curled up as the true energy within his body surged. He said, "How would I know without even trying?"

However, just as true energy surged out from their bodies and they were about to confront each other, a slender figure slowly walked over.

The clear footsteps were extremely conspicuous within the vast Gate of Heavenly Mystery. At least, the gaze of Zhao Musheng, Xiao Meng as well as other people were all attracted by the sound and landed on the figure who was slowly approaching.

The expression on Ji Chengxue's face suddenly became somewhat lively as he stared at the person with a look of incredulity on his face.

Xiao Meng raised his eyebrows and looked at that person in surprise.

Xiao Yanyu and Xiao Xiaolong were both dumbfounded...

"Owner Bu... What is he doing here?" Xiao Yanyu said, wondering whether to laugh or cry.

Zhao Musheng's expression was strange as he looked at the young man standing before him, whose cultivation level was only fourth grade Battle-Spirit. In his eyes, the young man was calm and composed as he walked toward him and actually waved at him before expressionlessly opening his mouth.

"Umm... I am just passing through. I'll leave right after I borrow something from you," Bu Fang said as he gave Zhao Musheng a glance.

Zhao Musheng was bewildered. "Borrow? Borrow what?"

Thereafter, Bu Fang raised his hand and pointed toward the fruit with three cloud-like patterns in Zhao Musheng's hand. He seriously said, "There, that fruit in your hand."

Chapter 136: Why Is Owner Bu So Adorable?

"There, I want to borrow that fruit in your hand," Bu Fang seriously said with an extremely solemn expression.

At that moment, the Gate of Heavenly Mystery was very quiet with the sound of the wind whistling in the background. Therefore, Bu Fang's words were clearly heard by everyone there even though his voice was not loud.

Xiao Yanyu and Xiao Xiaolong grimaced in embarrassment for Bu Fang. They did not know whether to laugh or cry. "Even though the mood was so serious, he actually came over to borrow the fruit... Furthermore, he's even trying to borrow a seventh grade spirit fruit. Does he really think the other party is an idiot?"

Xiao Xiaolong wanted to make a sarcastic comment. However, when he saw that serious expression on Bu Fang's face, he was unable to find the words to say... He thought, "Owner Bu might really be here to borrow the fruit."

The aura emanating from Xiao Meng subsided as he gravely looked at Bu Fang. He thought, "What is Owner Bu doing here? He's alone? Where's the ninth grade supreme beast and the strange puppet? He didn't bring them along?"

Without the supreme beast and the strange puppet, Bu Fang would be powerless because he was only a fourth grade Battle-Spirit. Almost every single person here could easily crush him. If that was the case, where did he find the courage to ask Zhao Musheng for the fruit?

Zhao Musheng uninterestedly looked at Bu Fang. He was unfamiliar with Bu Fang, but he had heard of such a person. He thought, "The owner of the black-hearted store which is being guarded by a ninth grade supreme beast?"

Zhao Musheng simply sniffed at those rumors. How could an

existence like the supreme beast be guarding a store? Those person spreading the rumors exaggerated too much.

"Oh? You want to borrow the fruit in my hand? Why should I lend it to you?" Zhao Musheng asked with a faint smile on his face. As he raised his hand, the Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit hovered on his palm.

A rich amount of spirit energy was leaking from the Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit. When Bu Fang saw this phenomenon, he was immediately overjoyed. The Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit was incredible. It was indeed qualified to be the main ingredient for brewing wine.

Forcing himself to calm down, Bu Fang's face remained expressionless as he gave Zhao Musheng a glance and indifferently replied, "Why? It's not like I am borrowing from you, who are you to ask me why?"

The expression on Zhao Musheng's face stiffened and the harmonious feeling was suddenly replaced by anger from embarrassment.

Bu Fang's words were basically correct because the Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit actually belonged to Emperor Changfeng. If Bu Fang wanted to borrow the fruit, he would be borrowing from Emperor Changfeng...

"Right now, the fruit is in my hand. Tell me, why should I give it to you?" Zhao Musheng let out a sneer as he gave Bu Fang a disdainful glance. Sensing that Bu Fang was merely a Battle-Spirit, he said, "How are you going to convince me with your cultivation level of a Battle-Spirit?"

Nearby, Xiao Meng was feeling somewhat nervous. Strictly speaking, Bu Fang was considered his benefactor because his elixir cuisine woke Ji Ru'Er from her coma. Therefore, he did not want to see Bu Fang getting beaten to death by an enraged Zhao Musheng.

As that dog and that puppet were not around, Xiao Meng could not figure out where Bu Fang drew his courage to stand firm against Zhao Musheng.

Bu Fang knitted his eyebrows together as he seriously looked at Zhao Musheng. "I don't like fighting.

"However, if necessary, I don't mind using violence to resolve problems."

Thereafter, he raised his hand and the image on his wrist suddenly flashed. As a wisp of green smoke encircled his hand, a pitch-black kitchen knife appeared.

Both Zhao Musheng and Xiao Meng were stunned. Even Ji Chengxue, who had just recovered from his surprise, went into a daze as well.

Could you imagine the hilarious feeling when a fourth grade Battle-Spirit holding a kitchen knife said that he would resolve the problem with violence when facing a seventh grade Battle-Saint?

Up in the air, outside of the Gate of Heavenly Mystery, Ni Yan could not help but burst into laughter as she watched this scene. She thought, " Why is Owner Bu so adorable? "

Ni Yan was amused for quite a while as she watched Bu Fang hold the kitchen knife with a serious expression as if he was provoking Zhao Musheng. She was wondering why Bu Fang would participate in this conflict and it turned out his motive was the Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit.

"As expected of a chef, he's willing to risk his life for the sake of a valuable ingredient," she thought.

Suddenly, Ni Yan abruptly stopped laughing and an incredulous look appeared on her peerless face.

Her eyes widened as she looked into the distance... She saw that the Double Calamity Dragon Head Array, which had been deactivated when Zhao Musheng destroyed its crux, was actually

operating again. A far more powerful wave of aura was bubbling up from underneath the imperial palace.

The aura emanating from the Double Calamity Dragon Head Array was far more frightening than before!

"What's going on?!"

Ni Yan's face was filled with bewilderment.

Inside the Gate of Heavenly Mystery, everyone was amused by the sight of a figure holding a kitchen knife. A fourth grade Battle-Spirit was challenging a seventh grade Battle-Saint... Was this not an act of suicide? The gulf of difference between them was completely insurmountable.

True energy started circulating within Xiao Meng's body once more. He was ready to save Bu Fang at any moment. He could not watch his benefactor get beaten to death by Zhao Musheng without lending a hand.

However, the scene that was about to happen was so shocking that it almost caused everyone's eyeballs to explode from shock.

Zhao Musheng viewed Bu Fang's provocation with contempt. If any Battle-Spirit was allowed to provoke a Battle-Saint without any fear of reprisal, then what would happen to the dignity of a Battle-Saint?

Therefore, Zhao Musheng's response was a single palm strike. The true energy contained within that palm strike was enough to easily erase a Battle-Spirit.

The palm strike seemed light as a feather as if he was about to squash a fly.

Bu Fang expressionlessly watched as Zhao Musheng threw out a palm strike. He raised up the kitchen knife and directed true energy from his dantian into the knife. Suddenly, a huge change occurred to the pitch-black kitchen knife.

Brilliant and dazzling rays of golden light radiated from the kitchen knife and almost illuminated the entire Gate of Heavenly Mystery. Subsequently, a distant and violent draconic roar came from within the kitchen knife.

Roar!

As the draconic roar sounded out from the kitchen knife, the entire Gate of Heavenly Mystery shook for a moment as another distant draconic roar rang out.

After slicing apart Zhao Musheng's palm strike, Bu Fang hoisted the gigantic Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife over his shoulder and puzzledly scanned his surroundings... Why was there two roars?

Zhao Musheng's complexion immediately changed when he heard the draconic roar. That kitchen knife was giving him an enormous sense of danger. Furthermore, he sensed that the Double Calamity Dragon Head Array which should be deactivated... had been reactivated!

How could it be operating again? Was the crux of the magic array not Ji Changfeng's corpse? With the crux destroyed, how could the magic array be reactivated?

Zhao Musheng's complexion was somewhat unsightly as he scanned his surroundings. However, he soon discovered that the lights of the magic array were not projecting toward Ji Changfeng's coffin. Instead, they were casting on... the gigantic kitchen knife that was held by the young man before him?!

Bu Fang was in a slight daze as he let the Golden Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife rest over his shoulder. He was not startled by the magic array. Rather, he discovered that quite a bit of information had suddenly appeared in his mind. Apparently... it was the instructions to control this magic array.

Bu Fang was feeling somewhat puzzled as he expressionlessly swept his eyes over the astounded people in his surroundings.

Subsequently, an idea struck him and he exerted his will according to the instructions.

The light radiating from the Golden Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife became even brighter as a burst of dazzling energy emanated from underneath Bu Fang's feet. A ferocious simulacrum of a divine dragon rose into the sky in a serpentine manner. There was a difference between this divine dragon simulacrum and Ji Changfeng's version. Bu Fang's dragon seemed to be equipped with some intelligence.

With a roar, the divine dragon climbed into the sky. Thereafter, under Bu Fang's control, the dragon lowered its head and slowly focused its eyes on Zhao Musheng.

With victory assured, Bu Fang broke into a grin and changed his carrying pose for the Golden Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife. He turned to Zhao Musheng and indifferently said, "Now... do you still want to settle the problem with violence?"

Chapter 137: Your Highness, I Brought Our Brothers to Root for You

Ni Yan was high above in the air, outside the Gate of Heavenly Mystery. She was bewildered as she stared at Bu Fang, who became the crux of the magic array, with her mouth wide open.

"How was Owner Bu able to activate the Double Calamity Dragon Head Array? This doesn't make sense at all! This magic array is among the top five within our sect's records. Even if we ignore the complexity of the magic array, controlling it shouldn't be possible for most people without acquiring the proper knowledge.

"The imperial family of the Light Wind Empire has records of this magic array's control method and every generation of emperor would study them carefully. Therefore, Emperor Changfeng was able to use the magic array. However... why the hell is Owner Bu capable of controlling this magic array as well?"

Ni Yan's expression was odd as she stared at Bu Fang's figure inside the Gate of Heavenly Mystery. Multiple pieces of jade appeared in her hand and she started to divine the reason by fiddling with them... Thereafter, she understood what was going on.

The cause of everything was the kitchen knife that underwent a dramatic change in appearance in Bu Fang's hand.

Ni Yan sucked in a breath of cold air and exclaimed in her mind... A semi-divine tool made from dragon bones!

Furthermore, it was not made from ordinary dragon bones. The magic array was actually activated by the aura of the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife and automatically appointed the knife as its crux. As a result, the owner of the kitchen knife, Bu Fang, logically obtained the qualification to control the magic array.

Up to this point, Ni Yan had no more words for the current

situation. She could only click her tongue in wonder and envy Bu Fang for owning a semi-divine tool.

...

Zhao Musheng swallowed his saliva as he gazed at the massive head of the divine dragon. The immense draconic aura made him feel as if he had fallen into a swamp.

He could not understand why the Double Calamity Dragon Head Array, which he already destroyed, was suddenly reactivated. Furthermore, the person controlling it became a young man who was holding a kitchen knife. Even though he did not want to admit it, the kitchen knife Bu Fang was holding was somewhat magical.

Even though the large kitchen knife still possessed the appearance of a kitchen knife, it was giving him an astonishing impression at first glance.

"Now... Do you still want to resolve the problem with violence?" Bu Fang asked with a smile.

As true energy slowly circulated within Zhao Musheng's dantian, the draconic aura that was suppressing him to the point where breathing was somewhat difficult quietly dissipated. He narrowed his eyes at Bu Fang.

As an expert from the Buddhist sect, the Mahayana Island, Zhao Musheng knew the rarity and value of the Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit very well. It was a spirit fruit that could help a sixth grade Battle-Emperor become a seventh grade Battle-Saint.

He was obviously reluctant to surrender the fruit just like that.

Holding the Path-Understanding Fruit on one hand, it started to slowly rotate within the dense amount of true energy and emanate a rich fruity fragrance.

"You're not someone from the imperial family. So what if you can activate this magic array? You don't know how to control it at all, there's nothing you can do to stop me," Zhao Musheng said with a

sneer as he tapped the ground with his toes. He rose up into the air and started heading outside of the magic array.

Xiao Meng's eyebrows were knitted together. He was planning to intervene. He could not allow Zhao Musheng to take away those three treasures. Otherwise, how was the Light Wind Empire going to uphold its dignity in the future?

However, just when Xiao Meng was about to intervene, from the corner of his eye he saw a smile appear on Bu Fang's lips.

"This expression..." Xiao Meng thought as he raised his eyebrows. The true energy surging within his body calmed down once more. Evidently, Owner Bu was not going to let Zhao Musheng escape so easily.

"Who told you that I can't control this magic array?" Bu Fang asked as he wielded the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife that appeared to be cast from gold and pointed it toward Zhao Musheng.

As he exerted his will, a draconic roar sounded out and the entire magic array brightly lit up as if waking up in that instant.

The divine dragon simulacrum reached its claw toward Zhao Musheng who was walking in mid air.

"Hmph!"

With a snort, Zhao Musheng fully released the aura of a seventh grade Battle-Saint. Forming a mudra with one hand, he started chanting a profound sutra. Behind him, a gigantic simulacrum of a Buddha slowly materialized.

Secret technique of the Mahayana Island, the Arhat's Finger.

The simulacrum of a Buddha pointed a finger toward the dragon claw. The air seemed to be boiling as the two attacks collided together in the air, and then... there was nothing after that.

Everyone watched in astonishment as Zhao Musheng's Arhat was directly smashed into pieces by the dragon claw and a loud

explosion rang out, as if a balloon was popped.

Zhao Musheng violently vomited out a mouthful of blood and his body fell to the ground like a withered leaf.

The Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit was caught in mid fall by the divine dragon simulacrum and handed over to Bu Fang.

After receiving the Path-Understanding Fruit from the dragon's mouth, Bu Fang experienced a sense of dizziness. The true energy within his body was nearly depleted and the light on the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife had grown dimmer as well. Thereafter, the splendid kitchen knife turned back into a pitch-black knife once more.

Controlling the Double Calamity Dragon Head Array consumed Bu Fang's true energy as well. With the feeble true energy of a fourth grade Battle-Saint, he could only control the divine dragon simulacrum to perform a single attack. Bu Fang was rejoicing inwardly as well. Fortunately for him, Zhao Musheng actually chose to meet his attack head-on.

If Zhao Musheng had not chosen to meet his attack head-on and decided to dodge the attack, he might have discovered in the very next moment that Bu Fang was putting on a false front.

"But... Who cares! In any case, I've obtained the Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit. With this, I have the main ingredient for the wine," Bu Fang thought. He had already thought up a name for the wine. He decided to call it the "Three Stripes Path-Understanding Wine".

"Hmm?" Bu Fang pondered for a moment as if something was wrong. "Forget it, I'll just use this name for now."

Spurt...

Zhao Musheng spat out a mouthful of blood and staggered to his feet. His complexion was a waxy yellow and his breathing was irregular. He actually suffered defeat in the hands of a fourth grade

Battle-Spirit who provoked him with a kitchen knife...

He was bewildered, he felt regret, and he harbored doubts about his own life.

However, he was an expert from a Buddhist sect after all and his mind calmed down after a short while. When he saw Bu Fang's weakened appearance, he immediately understood... He thought, "This fellow could only activate one attack using the magic array. After that attack, his true energy will be drained and he'll be extremely feeble.

"Even Emperor Changfeng had to gather so many treasures as well as utilize Chief Eunuch Lian's true energy as support in order to control the Double Calamity Dragon Head Array, how could a mere fourth grade Battle-Spirit have that sort of assets?"

"Good... Very good! You're Owner Bu, correct? I, Zhao Musheng, have committed you to memory!"

Zhao Musheng steadied his body and stared closely at Bu Fang. Thereafter, he gave a smile before turning around and then forcibly circulated the true energy within his body. He was planning to escape.

It was unwise for him to stay there any longer. If he did not leave immediately, he might not be able to leave any more.

"Zhao Musheng, you old thief! Where do you think you're going!" Xiao Meng glared daggers at Zhao Musheng as the aura of a seventh grade Battle-Saint erupted. With a single step, he rose into the air and charged toward Zhao Musheng.

However, just as he took off from the ground, Zhao Musheng turned around and threw a stone as black as ink toward him. That stone appeared to be warping the air and also seemed to possess a magical power that was completely attracting Xiao Meng's attention.

Boom!

The aura of immense amount of spirits burst forth from the stone and untold sounds of wailing could be heard.

Xiao Meng's expression immediately changed and he hurriedly suppressed the stone. If the grudgeful spirits escaped from the Departed Soul Orb, it would definitely be disastrous for the imperial city.

At the same time, Zhao Musheng made use of this opportunity to swiftly escape.

"Till we meet again... Owner Bu, next time, I will definitely pay a visit to your store!" Zhao Musheng's voice rang out from afar and then his figure disappeared into the distance.

After Zhao Musheng left, the sound of armor rattling rang out from outside the Gate of Heavenly Mystery. A man with a full beard whose entire body was wrapped in bandages limped into the Gate of Heavenly Mystery, wearing only half of his armor.

"Your Highness, I brought our brothers to root for you!"

The man with a full beard unclearly shouted. His appearance was so comical that Ji Chengxue did not know whether to laugh or cry. However, when he saw that the man with a full beard was still alive, he breathed a sigh of relief inside.

In a distance, Bu Fang kept his Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife and slowly headed toward Ji Chengxue with the Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit in his hand.

Chapter 138: The Egg-Fried Rice That One Could Never Get Tired Of

"Owner Bu, many thanks for your help," Ji Chengxue said with a smile as he performed a fist and palm salute. As he looked at Bu Fang's serene appearance, he could not help but be somewhat amazed.

A fourth grade Battle-Spirit was actually able to injure a seventh grade Battle-Saint to the point where he was vomiting blood and force him to run away. Even though he might have exploited the magic array to accomplish this, this was already considered an incredible achievement.

It was a fact that the difference between a Battle-Spirit and a Battle-Saint was like a chasm and was basically insurmountable.

"Owner Bu is mysterious indeed... His identity is definitely not simple!" Ji Chengxue thought.

Bu Fang gave Ji Chengxue a glance and went into a daze for a moment. Only then did he gestured toward the Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit in his hand and said, "This fruit... Can you give it to me?"

Bu Fang looked at Ji Chengxue very seriously. He believed the latter would not refuse him.

Even though the Path-Understanding Fruit was valuable, Bu Fang used the Phoenix Blood Herb to save Ji Chengxue before. The value of the Phoenix Blood Herb was not any lower than the Path-Understanding Fruit. Besides... In order to return the favor of saving his life, Ji Chengxue would probably not refuse.

Emperor Changfeng had already passed away and King Yu was punished by him. The crown prince fell from grace while Ji Chengxue was the successor named in the posthumous edict. Now, he was the person who was definitely going to ascend the throne.

In other words, Ji Chengxue was already confirmed to be the next emperor of the Light Wind Empire.

"Give the fruit to Owner Bu... I don't see a reason not to!" Ji Chengxue solemnly replied.

Subsequently, Bu Fang delightedly nodded and patted Ji Chengxue on his shoulder. He thought, "I knew I didn't save you for nothing..."

The lid of the coffin was put back in place and the eight topless Battle-Kings lifted up the coffin once more. They followed the path and walked all the way out of the majestic Gate of Heavenly Mystery.

As they stepped into the imperial city's Long Street, the citizens were all standing on the sides of the street and quietly looking at the bronze coffin. The silence was filled with grief and reverence.

Emperor Changfeng, an outstanding ruler, was indeed worthy of their reverence.

The snow swirling in the sky seemed to have turned into withered petals as they drifted down in large volumes, as if accompanying the elegy being played by the court musicians.

As the funeral procession proceeded on, the sides of the street were filled with citizens. Some of them had puffy eyes, while others were kowtowing despite the chilly weather...

People could not help but sigh as they watched these scene unfold.

Ji Chengxue's gaze was filled with determination. The various actions of the citizens were all affecting him emotionally. He was astonished to realize that the stern and imposing father in his eyes was actually loved and respected by so many people. This was a true monarch, the actual sovereign of an empire.

He... wanted to become an emperor like this as well!

...

Bu Fang returned to the store and collapsed on a chair. He was so tired that he did not want to move at all. After activating the Double Calamity Dragon Head Array, the true energy within his dantian was completely depleted. It was as unbearable as going without food for three days.

However, even though he suffered so much, Bu Fang was still quite pleased with the result. There was no other reason but the fact that he obtained the Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit!

It was a seventh grade spirit fruit, a treasure with a price but no market. It was the main ingredient for the wine he was going to brew next.

Bu Fang took out the Path-Understanding Fruit and its fragrance immediately permeated the store. The three cloud-like patterns on its surface were like drifting white clouds, causing Bu Fang's eyes to follow them. Each of the cloud-like patterns seemed to be emanating a strange fragrance. As Bu Fang breathed in the fragrance, he felt the rotational speed of the true energy vortex inside his body suddenly increased.

According to rumors, there was a high probability of a sixth grade Battle-Emperor gaining the opportunity to become a seventh grade Battle-Saint after consuming the Path-Understanding Fruit. That was the reason for the fruit's high value.

Dragging his tired body, Bu Fang entered the kitchen and opened a cupboard. He placed the remaining half of the Phoenix Blood Herb from the system's storage space inside and the Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit next to it.

The cupboard was provided by the system and its preservation effect was very outstanding. Furthermore, it was even capable of preventing the dissipation of spirit energy. It was very suitable for storing these spirit herbs.

After giving his body a stretch, Bu Fang washed his hands. He ensured that any dirt or grime were washed away, then rolled up his sleeves and prepared to start cooking.

The true energy within his body was completely depleted and he felt as if he had been starving for a while. He had a feeling that he would not be able to get up the next day if he did not cook something and fill his stomach with food.

Even though Bu Fang was exhausted, he became meticulous once cooking was involved. His movements were smooth like drifting clouds and flowing water as he completed all of the preparation work.

The melodious and rhythmic sound of stir-frying resounded within the kitchen. After a while, a rich fragrance wafted out from the kitchen. An aroma that would make a person salivate and cause their stomach to rumble.

Soon, a steaming plate of Egg-Fried Rice that seemed to be dressed with a golden sauce was placed on the table.

Bu Fang wiped off the water droplets on his hands and sat down on a chair before letting out a long breath. As he looked at the Egg-Fried Rice that was so exquisite that it was like a piece of artwork, his face was filled with content and satisfaction. Food was meant to make people happy and being able to cook food that delighted others was even more exhilarating.

After Bu Fang finished admiring his handiwork, he eagerly started eating. He used a porcelain spoon to scoop up a spoonful of the Egg-Fried Rice. The flowing egg which was eighty percent cooked left a string-like trail as he lifted the spoon up. The rich fragrance of the egg bundled with the aroma of the rice burst forth like an explosion and instantly enveloped Bu Fang's nose.

"No matter how many times I've eaten this Egg-Fried Rice, I don't get tired of it," Bu Fang exclaimed.

A single plate of Egg-Fried Rice was not much for Bu Fang since he was hungry. After he finished eating, he felt a warm feeling coursing through his body. There seemed to be true energy circulating within his stomach and the true energy vortex in his dantain was vigorously spinning after he digested the spirit energy in the Egg-Fried Rice.

"I've finally recovered," Bu Fang thought as a smile broke on his face. Thereafter, he tidied up the tableware and went back to his room on the second floor. He took a shower before getting onto his bed and going to sleep.

At that moment, night had already fallen. The two crescent moons were calling each other in the sky and radiating a cold moonlight.

...

After Emperor Changfeng's funeral, the new emperor, Ji Chengxue, guarded the imperial mausoleum for three days and finally returned to the imperial court. King Yu, Ji Chengyu, was stripped of his kingship and his cultivation was sealed. He was sentenced to guard the imperial mausoleum for three years and prohibited from leaving.

Ji Chengyu's downfall happened in an instant. People could not help but pity his predicament.

After Ji Chengxue ascended to the throne, he conferred the title of Carefree King to the crown prince. He forbade the latter from controlling military forces and dabbling in politics. Perhaps, this might be the best end for Ji Chengan.

With the enthronement of a new emperor, the Light Wind Empire started flourishing once more. During the period after Emperor Changfeng passed away, the entire imperial court seemed to have descended into disorder and came to a standstill.

The chief of eunuchs, Lian Fu, did not return to the imperial city.

Rather, he stayed at the imperial mausoleum and continued to guard Emperor Changfeng's tomb. According to Lian Fu's own wishes, he wished to guard the mausoleum for the rest of his life.

This resolve caused Ji Chengxue to be speechless with esteem. Therefore, he chose not to recall Lian Fu.

For Ji Chengxue, the biggest disadvantage of becoming the emperor was not being able to eat at Owner Bu's store. He could no longer eat his favorite Red Braised Meat and drink his favorite Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine. With a thick stack of documents to handle, he could not find the time to leave the imperial palace.

Furthermore, Bu Fang's store only allowed the Oyster Pancake for takeouts. If he ate Oyster Pancakes every single day... he would get sick. Therefore, Ji Chengxue was craving for the store's dishes.

After some time passed, the Light Wind Empire finally recovered with the efforts of Ji Chengxue and many court officials. Some of the order was meticulously restored.

Everything was headed toward a thriving direction.

As the winter days passed by, the Light Wind Empire's Spring Festival... was quietly approaching.

Chapter 139: His Majesty Loves to Watch... Others Run in the Nude?

The Spring Festival was a traditional holiday passed down through the generations ever since the Light Wind Empire was first founded. It was one of the most festive days in a year within the empire. Every household would gather together and celebrate the start of a new year. Simply put, this was a day where the entire empire celebrated.

Within the empire's majestic palace, the opulent structures were barely noticeable under a layer of snow. Inside the Main Hall, the entire imperial court was respectfully assembled in front of the new emperor sitting on the throne, Ji Chengxue.

Ji Chengxue was sitting on the throne, wearing a golden dragon robe and a golden crown. With a stern expression on his face, the imposing aura of an emperor was fully demonstrated and somewhat resembled Emperor Changfeng.

One of the high-ranking court official stepped forward and bowed toward Ji Chengxue. He said, "Your Majesty, tomorrow is the day of the Spring Festival which coincides with Your Majesty's enthronement. Should the scale of the Hundred Family Banquet this year be expanded?"

"The Hundred Family Banquet?" Ji Chengxue thought for a moment and immediately understood the intention behind the official's question. There was a significance to this Hundred Family Banquet as well. It was an event held on the day of the Spring Festival by the Light Wind Empire's imperial family. A hundred tables would be set up at the Gate of Heavenly Mystery and famous chefs from all over the imperial city would be invited to cook for one hundred households chosen through lottery.

This was also the most popular event during the Spring Festival because all of the chefs in the imperial city would be present,

including the chefs from the imperial kitchen.

Tasting dishes made by the imperial kitchen was something that commoners would never dare to think about and they were basically not qualified to taste the dishes of the imperial chefs. And so, the Spring Festival was the only chance for them to taste delicious dishes that they would never forget for the rest of their life.

The purpose for holding this event was to reward the citizens for their year-long hard work, giving them a stable life under the empire's protection.

This was a good thing for both the citizens and the Light Wind Empire... As for the other chefs located in the imperial city, this was a rare opportunity as well.

The Hundred Family Banquet was a chance for them to display their culinary skills because the emperor himself would personally attend the event. If their talents were recognized by the emperor, they could become an imperial chef and bring honor to their ancestors!

Ji Chengxue nodded as he looked toward the court official with interest and asked, "Expand the scale? In what way do you think the scale should be expanded?"

The court official was immediately overjoyed. During the fight over the throne between the three princes, he was supporter of the crown prince, However, the crown prince lost his power and became a mere figurehead. As a court official, he was obviously fearful of making any mistakes and be demoted by Ji Chengxue.

Even though the current situation of the imperial court was going well, each of the court officials was apprehensive about their future. After all, since the emperor was going to foster his own faction, he would definitely need to remove some of the older court officials. During this period of time, he had already seen quite a number of court officials getting demoted...

"This humble subject has already passed down an order a few days ago to select the top three chefs of each region to cook for this year's Hundred Family Banquet. Furthermore, the scale of the Hundred Family Banquet would increase to three hundred tables and three hundred households would be chosen, which exactly reaches the maximum limit of the Gate of Heavenly Mystery.

"In addition, the best chef would be selected through voting. The chef who has received the most amount of votes from the households would obtain the title of the best chef and receive a reward as well," the court official respectfully said.

The moment his plan was revealed, a commotion spread throughout the entire imperial court and everyone was whispering to each other.

This was a bold plan and also proved that this court official had placed everything at stake in order to earn some achievements.

Ji Chengxue narrowed his eyes and pondered for a moment. The corner of his lips curled up as he nodded. This was a rather good plan. Since he had just ascended the throne, the public's sentiment of him was still not stable. Hosting such an event would shape his image in the eyes of the public.

"A contest between chefs..." As Ji Chengxue thought about this matter, Bu Fang's figure appeared in his mind and his expression became somewhat odd.

"If Owner Bu could be persuaded to participate in the Hundred Family Banquet, this year's event would definitely be very exciting. With Owner Bu's culinary skills, he would definitely be able to conquer the preferences of the three hundred households."

Therefore, Ji Chengxue turned toward the court official who was feeling rather proud at the moment and asked, "This is a very good idea. Let me ask you, have you invited Owner Bu? Or rather, has Owner Bu agreed to participate?"

The court official was surprised for a moment. Thereafter, his expression slightly changed and became somewhat unsightly.

"Your Majesty, the black-hearted... Erm, this humble subject has also sent someone to invite Fang Fang's Little Store. However..."

The expression on the court official's face became somewhat odd and he hesitated to continue speaking.

Ji Chengxue suddenly became extremely curious and asked, "What's going on? What's the result?"

"The person that this humble subject sent... came back naked. Owner Bu... did not agree," the court official hesitantly said, seemingly embarrassed by the topic.

With those words, the entire imperial court all exchanged looks. Came back naked? Was he stripped naked?

"Hahahaha! Owner Bu. If my guess is right, the person you sent was definitely a pompous person and didn't understand Owner Bu's temperament." The moment Ji Chengxue heard the court official's report, he could not hold in his laughter and suddenly started laughing.

The expression of the court officials attending the imperial court became extremely odd. "Why is His Majesty laughing? Is he laughing because of nude streaking? Could it be... His Majesty loves to watch others run in the nude?"

The court official nodded and said, "The person sent by this humble subject is indeed rather pompous, but... the fact that Fang Fang's Little Store stripped him naked is still indecent."

"All right, I know what you're trying to say. You don't have to send anyone else either. You don't need to worry about inviting Owner Bu to participate in the Hundred Family Banquet," Ji Chengxue said while waving his hand. Thereafter, he looked toward the drowsy Ouyang Zongheng.

"General Ouyang, regarding the matter about inviting Owner Bu,

you shall personally invite him... How about it?" Ji Chengxue asked.

Ouyang Zongheng suddenly lurched forward and woke up from his doze. There was still saliva on his beard as he asked with a dazed expression, "Which rebel do you want me to catch? Give me an order, Your Majesty! This old subject will definitely not take even half a step backward"

Seeing his comical appearance, the court officials could not hold in their laughter.

"General, isn't your daughter, Xiaoyi, working as a waitress in Fang Fang's Little Store? I'll leave in your hand the matter about inviting Owner Bu to participate in the Hundred Family Banquet," Ji Chengxue said with a chuckle. Thereafter, he left after dismissing the imperial court, no longer paying any attention to the bewildered General Ouyang.

...

As the winter wind rustled, the snow swirled in the air and fell.

After Bu Fang finished cooking all of Fatty Jin's orders, he was free once more. He walked toward the entrance and cozily sat down on a chair, leaning on the backrest. In his hand, he was holding a cup of boiling water provided by the system. It was boiled using spring water from Tianshan and contained a faint amount of spirit energy. In addition, the water was both sweet and refreshing.

After taking a small sip of the water, Bu Fang let out a deep breath with a satisfied expression on his face.

Suddenly, ripples formed on the surface of the water in his cup. As the ripples faded away, a slight vibration came from the direction of the alleyway.

Bu Fang puzzledly looked up and saw a crowd of figures in a distance.

Ouyang Xiaoyi was skipping ahead while her three bestial brothers followed behind her...

Furthermore, around the three barbarians of Ouyang, there was still a dense crowd of people, both men and women...

Bu Fang expressionlessly watched as the large crowd of people rushed toward the store...

"What's going on? Xiaoyi is coming to work... while bringing her family?"

Chapter 140: He's Treating Them to a Meal? What a Nouveau Riche!

Don don don!

The ground was shaking as if a gigantic creature was passing through and the three barbarians of Ouyang appeared in front of Bu Fang with their large bodies.

"Leave some space for your father! Who told you to stand so closely together?!"

Behind them, an exasperated shout sounded out. Thereafter, Ouyang Zhen and Ouyang Wu scratched their heads in embarrassment and moved sideways, letting a figure squeeze through from between them.

"You brats, have you been eating so much that you're suffering from indigestion? Why are you all so fat! When we get back, I am going to triple your training volume!" Ouyang Zongheng shouted as he pointed at the three barbarians of Ouyang with a sour expression, nearly spraying saliva all over their faces.

The three barbarians of Ouyang wiped their faces and awkwardly laughed. However, when they heard their training volume was going to triple, their expressions immediately turned sour and they were somewhat speechless. How was their bodies considered fat... They had already trained to a point where only muscles were left!

"Dad! What are you doing! Owner Bu is watching you!" Ouyang Xiaoyi's unsatisfied voice rang out. Ouyang Zongheng's expression immediately made a hundred and eighty degree turn and he moved closer to Ouyang Xiaoyi with a face full of smiles.

"My obedient daughter, daddy is teaching decorum to your elder brothers. The things you said before, daddy has memorized them!"

After seeing Ouyang Zongheng continuously nod his head, only then did Ouyang Xiaoyi let out a snort. She looked toward Bu Fang

and cheerfully said, "Owner Bu, let me introduce you. This is my dad, a great general of the empire! He's formidable just like Uncle Xiao!"

As Ouyang Xiaoyi introduced Ouyang Zongheng, a solemn expression immediately appeared on his face. He stuck his chest out and nodded toward Bu Fang with his head held high.

Bu Fang expressionlessly looked at him. He raised the steaming cup of water in his hand and took a small sip before he softly replied, "Oh."

Ouyang Zongheng's face immediately stiffened. He thought, "This rascal... He's as conceited as in the rumors!"

"This is my first mom, second mom, third mom... sixth mom!" Ouyang Xiaoyi said as she one by one dragged over several elegant ladies. Seeing her cheerful appearance, Bu Fang broke into a grin and nodded toward them.

"These are my three foolish brothers, I don't think an introduction is needed."

As for the three barbarians of Ouyang... Ouyang Xiaoyi directly skipped past them because Bu Fang was actually quite familiar with them.

"Owner Bu," the three barbarians of Ouyang said as they solemnly performed a fist and palm salute toward Bu Fang.

Bu Fang stood up from his chair and nodded before beckoning them to enter the store. The freezing weather outside was not suitable for staying out.

"Xiaoyi, why have you brought so many people?" Bu Fang puzzledly asked.

"Dad said he wanted to discuss something with you. As for my moms, they're here to eat delicious food. Dad said he's treating them!" Ouyang Xiaoyi excitedly said. She looked very adorable with her rosy cheeks and eyes glittering like gemstones.

"He's treating them?" Bu Fang was surprised for a moment and then he gave Ouyang Zongheng an odd glance. "He... Can he afford it?"

"Then, come right in. If you're looking to order something, the menu is right behind you. Xiaoyi, you should accompany your parents today," Bu Fang said and then headed toward the kitchen.

Ouyang Zongheng wanted to say something as he watched Bu Fang's back figure but became hesitant. He thought, "Forget it, I'll wait after we're done eating. Let's taste the flavor of his dishes first, see whether they're as delicious as in the rumors and whether he's worthy enough for me to personally invite."

When Ouyang Zongheng turned around to look at the menu, he almost spat out a mouthful of blood!

He suddenly recalled that every single dish in the black-hearted store was shockingly expensive. He thought, "Did I hit myself on the head or something? Why did I promise Xiaoyi that I would treat everyone to a meal!"

As he looked at the row of prices that were using crystals as the currency, Ouyang Zongheng's heart was dripping with blood and both of his hands were trembling. He thought, "These women better go easy on me, I only have a little bit of secret stash left."

"Xiaoyi, which dish is the most delicious?" Xiaoyi's first mom moved next to her and asked with a smile.

Ouyang Xiaoyi pointed at the menu and said, "Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs!"

Ouyang Zongheng's lips trembled for a moment and his nostrils widened. He felt as if Ouyang Xiaoyi had just ripped apart his heart with a dagger while letting out a high-pitched laughter... Fifty crystals disappeared just like that.

"Xiaoyi, tell your second mom. Which dish is the most delicious?" Xiaoyi's second mom asked with a smile as she dotingly pinched

Xiaoyi's rosy cheeks.

Ouyang Xiaoyi pointed at the menu and said, "Red Braised Meat!"

The corners of Ouyang Zongheng mouth twitched and he nearly spat out a mouthful of blood. He thought, "Red Braised Meat... That costs a hundred crystals per serving! This brat, why are you only choosing the expensive dishes! Could you not sabotage your father like that?"

The Xiaoyi's others moms came over as well and let her recommend dishes to them. Ouyang Xiaoyi pointed at the menu and one by one recommended all of the expensive dishes.

Ouyang Zongheng had already collapsed weakly on his chair. His eyes as he watched Ouyang Xiaoyi... were already devoid of life.

At this rate, they were going to spend all of his secret stash!

"Dad? Aren't you going to order something?" Ouyang Xiaoyi charmingly asked as she puzzledly looked at her father who was looking back at her with a resentful expression. Thereafter, her eyes narrowed into adorable crescent moons and she asked with a smile, "Do you need me to help you order as well?"

"No, give me a serving of... erm, Dry-Mixed Noodles is fine, dad isn't a picky eater," Ouyang Zongheng seriously said after hurriedly sitting up.

The three barbarians of Ouyang were much more simple. They were satisfied after ordering a serving of Lees Fish and a jar of Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine.

When Ouyang Xiaoyi cheerfully relayed all of the orders to Bu Fang, even he was slightly surprised. As he looked toward Ouyang Zongheng who was sitting up straight, he thought, "What a nouveau riche!"

After a short while, a rich fragrance wafted out from the kitchen. The aroma of the dishes captivated Ouyang Zongheng and his family, who came to Bu Fang's store for the first time.

Ouyang Zongheng's wives were already extremely excited by this fragrance.

As the saying goes, if one wished to capture the heart of a woman, they should start with their stomach. Before Bu Fang's dishes were even served, the fragrance alone had already enthralled the wives of Ouyang Zongheng.

"This is your Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs, please enjoy your meal." Bu Fang did not call Ouyang Xiaoyi to serve the dish. Instead, he slowly walked out of the kitchen while carrying a celadon plate and placed the dish before Xiaoyi's first mom.

Xiaoyi's first mom was already fascinated by the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs. The amber-colored dish seemed to possess some sort of magic that caused Xiaoyi's first mom to continuously swallow her saliva and even toss away her usual modesty.

After a piece of Sweet 'n' Sour Rib entered her mouth, Xiaoyi's first mom was completely captivated by the meat's flavor.

Ouyang Zongheng was filled with craving as he watched his wife and could not bear it any longer. He gave the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs a glance and reached his hand out to grab a piece of rib.

Slap!

"Who told you to touch my Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs! If you want to eat, order it yourself! Shame on you!" Xiaoyi's first mom slapped away Ouyang Zongheng's secretly outstretched hand with a furious expression on her face.

Thereafter, she dragged the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs into her embrace like she was protecting her children.

Ouyang Zongheng expressionlessly thought, "What do you mean by order it myself... If I still have any money left, I would definitely order two servings. I'd have one myself and... oh, feed the other serving to a dog!"

Subsequently, Bu Fang served the dishes one after another. The

overwhelming fragrant dishes had almost completely changed Ouyang Zongheng's concept of smell. He thought, "How could such an aroma exist in this world?"

Unfortunately, he could only smell the aroma.

Finally, it was the turn for his dish to be served. Ouyang Zongheng was extremely melancholic and felt as if two streams of tears were going to flow down his face.

"Here's your Dry-Mixed Noodles, please enjoy your meal," Bu Fang said.

Ouyang Zongheng's eyes were devoid of life as he expressionlessly looked at the bowl of completely dry noodles in front of him.

Chapter 141: Crush Everything Before You, Young Man!

"Slurp!"

Ouyang Zongheng stroked his beard as he picked up the noodles with his chopsticks and sent them into his mouth. Even though the appearance of the Dry-Mixed Noodles was pathetic-looking compared to Red Braised Meat and Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs... It was still paid for with his money!

"Oh?!" The rich flavor of the noodles burst forth the moment it entered his mouth, causing Ouyang Zongheng's eyes to immediately widen. He subconsciously exerted more strength and the noodles were suddenly sucked into his mouth with a slurp.

The sauce of the noodles sprayed everywhere and a rich fragrance pervaded the air.

Even though the fragrance of the Dry-Mixed Noodles was not as strong as the Egg-Fried Rice and not as enticing as the Red Braised Meat, this sort of faint fragrance was even more tempting. The moment Ouyang Zongheng started slurping down the noodles, he could no longer stop himself. In that instant, the sound of Ouyang Zongheng slurping the noodles resounded throughout the store.

As Ouyang Xiaoyi gleefully gulped down a mouthful of the Fish Head Tofu Soup, the mellow flavor of the soup spread from the tip of her tongue and caused her to be completely captivated. She felt as if she had turned into a fish and was freely roaming in a milky white sea. Once in a while, she would even cheerfully bite into corals made from tofu.

"Slurp!"

As the sound of slurping rang out, Ouyang Xiaoyi's beautiful fantasy was ruthlessly broken. The irritating feeling of suddenly being dragged back into reality caused her to angrily turn toward

her dad who was busy slurping down noodles next to her.

"Can't you eat your noodles in a quieter manner? You're disturbing my enjoyment of the fish soup! Smelly dad!" Ouyang Xiaoyi resentfully said with a pout.

"...Cough cough cough!"

Ouyang Zongheng's eyes widened as the sound of slurping suddenly stopped and then his entire face turned red. He covered his mouth and started coughing... He ate too quickly and choked on the noodles.

Ouyang Zongheng grabbed the cup of Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine that Ouyang Zhen was just about to drink and then finished the entire cup in a single gulp. He immediately felt a relaxing and refreshing sensation coursing through his body!

"Ha... How invigorating!" Ouyang Zongheng said with satisfaction as he wiped his beard with his sleeve.

As he smacked his lips, his nostrils suddenly flared up. He thought, "My gosh... What is this smell! Wine? What an aromatic wine?!"

Ouyang Zongheng looked at the celadon cup in his hand and broke into a grin when he saw Ouyang Di carrying a jar and pouring wine into a cup.

"You rascal, hurry up and fill this cup to the brim for your dad! How could you not share such a fine wine with your father! When we get back, I'll double your training volume!"

Both the three Ouyang brothers and Ouyang Xiaoyi were speechless.

"Slurp!" After finishing another cup of Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine, Ouyang Zongheng started his journey of slurping noodles once more.

...

After finishing their meal, the members of the Ouyang family were languidly leaning back on their seats in contentment. The satisfying feeling of tasting delicious food gave them great delight.

Bu Fang wiped off the water droplets on his hands and walked out of the kitchen. When he saw the languid members of the Ouyang family, he broke into a grin.

"The total amount is three hundred and twenty crystals and one hundred gold coins. Thank you for your patronage," Bu Fang said toward Ouyang Zongheng who was patting his stomach in satisfaction.

Ouyang Zongheng's action of patting his stomach immediately froze and he suddenly felt as if the entire world had gone dim... He thought, "Three hundred twenty crystals, how on earth do they eat so well!"

Under Ouyang Zongheng's extremely reluctant gaze, Bu Fang took the crystals and gold coins and brushed his hands together in satisfaction.

After he received this sum of money, the system's solemn voice resounded in his mind.

"Congratulations to the host for achieving a profit of twenty thousand crystals and completing a short term objective, you shall soon receive the system reward. The system reward is being released..."

Bu Fang was surprised for a moment. Thereafter, the corners of his lips curled up and he let out a deep breath. Without his realization, he had already reached a profit of twenty thousand crystals. It was not easy at all.

In other words, he obtained an amount of true energy worth ten thousand crystals. This also meant that his cultivation level had finally reached fifth grade Battle-King.

"I am finally a man who could be called Battle-King!" Bu Fang

gleefully thought. Just when he was about to examine the system's reward, Ouyang Zongheng suddenly moved closer to him. He was so close that Bu Fang could even smell the sauce of the Dry-Mixed Noodles that splashed on him.

Bu Fang knitted his eyebrows together as he took a step backward and indifferently looked at Ouyang Zongheng.

"If you have something to say, spit it out. Don't get so close to me," Bu Fang expressionlessly said.

Ouyang Zongheng's movement immediately froze and he suddenly gave an embarrassed smile. He wiped his hands on his clothes and said, "Owner Bu... It's like this, I actually came here today to discuss an important matter with you."

"Speak," Bu Fang replied.

"Owner Bu, your culinary skills are outrageously good. The flavor of your dishes has already reached an indescribable level. I don't think you want the delicious dishes that you personally cook to be stuck here in this store without anyone knowing, right? That's simply an insult to your culinary skills!" Ouyang Zongheng said while stroking his beard.

Bu Fang indifferently looked at him and beckoned him to continue.

"Owner Bu, you should know about the Spring Festival. Tomorrow's the first day of the Spring Festival and the Hundred Family Banquet will be held on the second day. On that day, well-known chefs from all over the Light Wind Empire would rush over to cook at the Hundred Family Banquet. This is the perfect opportunity to let everyone know about your culinary skills!" Ouyang Zongheng said with a smile as he stared intensely at Bu Fang.

"Therefore, Owner Bu, wouldn't you consider participating?"

The Spring Festival... Bu Fang narrowed his eyes and recalled

that a few minor officials had arrogantly come to his store to cause trouble some days ago. Their intentions also seemed to be getting him to participate in the Hundred Family Banquet...

"I don't care about your whatever Hundred Family Banquet. Arrogantly coming to my store and causing trouble is your fault," Bu Fang thought. Therefore, Bu Fang ordered Whitey to strip the minor officials and throw them out.

Bu Fang had almost forgotten about this matter but suddenly remembered it with Ouyang Zongheng's reminder.

"This Hundred Family Banquet seems pretty formidable from the sound of it," Bu Fang thought as he nodded and looked at Ouyang Zongheng.

"I am not going to participate. I am not interested," Bu Fang replied.

"Ah? What? You're not participating? Why?"

Ouyang Zongheng's expression stiffened and he immediately asked in confusion. In his opinion, participating in the Hundred Family Banquet for a chef was as important as participating in the imperial examination for a scholar.

As a chef, Bu Fang was actually not interested in participating in the Hundred Family Banquet hosted by the empire. This... was simply absurd!

"From the sound of its name, I already know it's a troublesome matter. I only want to peacefully cook delicious dishes in my store. If they're willing to frequent my store, they're very welcomed to do so," Bu Fang sincerely said. This was indeed his heartfelt thoughts. He was someone afraid of trouble.

His wish was to sit near the store's entrance with a cup of hot tea in his hand as he observe the changes in the world and watch the flowers blossom and wilt. It was that simple.

"Owner Bu, there will be a selection during this year's Hundred

Family Banquet. The number one chosen by the guests would be awarded by the empire. Aren't you interested in the rewards?" Ouyang Zongheng asked while staring at Bu Fang.

Reward? The empire's Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit was already taken away by Bu Fang, what else could they provide that would interest him?

"Abrupt mission 2: Would the host please participate in the Hundred Family Banquet hosted by the Light Wind Empire and get voted number one by the guests as well as obtain the empire's prize reward.

"Crush everything before you, young man.

"Mission reward: cooking method of the Spirit Turtle Egg Tart."

Bu Fang sighed internally. He was afraid of trouble but there were times when the system would issue troublesome abrupt missions to him.

Chapter 142: Feeling Empty, Lonely, and Cold on the Night Before the Spring Festival

"Do you really think a mere reward will be able to persuade me to participate?" Bu Fang stood there with his back straightened as he seriously looked at Ouyang Zongheng.

Ouyang Zongheng was surprised for a moment. He thought, "As expected of the chef acknowledged by His Majesty, his strength of character is incomparable to ordinary chefs. Looks like the difficulty of inviting Owner Bu is very high."

"Owner Bu, are you really not going to reconsider? This is an opportunity to let everyone know about your culinary skills!" Ouyang Zongheng asked with reluctance.

Bu Fang looked at him and blinked for a moment. He let out a deep breath and then asked, "First, tell me what's the reward for first place?"

"Hmm? What?" Ouyang Zongheng broke into a grin as he looked at Bu Fang. "You're already given in? What happened to your steadfastness? What happened to your moral integrity and indifference to materialistic goods?"

"Cough, cough... Owner Bu, it's like this. The reward of the Hundred Family Banquest this time is personally chosen by His Majesty from the imperial palace's treasury and the reward will only be announced after the first place is selected. Therefore, I don't know the answer to your question either... However, I can assure you that you won't be disappointed by the reward!" Ouyang Zongheng said with confidence while patting his chest.

Bu Fang lowered his eyes and pretended to think for a moment. Thereafter, he looked up at Ouyang Zongheng and said, "Alright, I agree to participate."

When Ouyang Zongheng heard that Bu Fang actually agreed to

participate in the Hundred Family Banquet, his face immediately brightened up like a blossoming chrysanthemum.

"Oh my, if Owner Bu is participating, you'll definitely win first place! Tsk, tsk, tsk. Your dishes are the best I've ever tasted, they're much better than the food cooked by the chefs from the imperial kitchen! Just one word, excellent!" Ouyang Zongheng gave Bu Fang a thumbs up as a string of praises left his lips.

If someone else saw this scene, they would never think that this salesman-like middle-aged man was actually a well-known general of the empire.

Ouyang Zongheng let out a deep breath and felt extremely relieved. Since Owner Bu had agreed, the mission given by the emperor was completed.

Even though the process was so painful that he could not breathe, the end result greatly satisfied him. Even so, the stash money that he had accumulated for the past few months was all used up by his daughter...

Bu Fang sent the member of the Ouyang family off with his eyes and then went back into the kitchen.

Bu Fang was someone afraid of trouble but he was a serious person as well. He had always treated culinary with a serious attitude. Since he had chosen to participate, then he would perform his very best.

Therefore, he would ensure that all preparations were made so that he could obtain first place in the upcoming Hundred Family Banquet.

...

As the Spring Festival approached, the streets of the imperial city became very lively and busy. Everyone was spring cleaning, putting up spring couplets, cooking delicious food, and preparing to welcome the coming new year.

The vendors along Long Street had all packed up their stalls earlier than usual and eagerly headed home with joyous expressions to welcome the coming new year with their families.

Dense amount of smoke drifted up into sky and was blown away by the wind.

As the night descended, the two moons hovered high above in the sky like two silver plates. The moonlight, that was usually eerie, seemed to have turned warm as it illuminated the streets.

On the streets, many children were running about in thickly padded clothings with rosy cheeks and breathing out clouds of white breath while holding lanterns in their hands. As they ran about, their laughter broke the silence of the night and created a festive mood.

Large red lanterns were hung at the doorways of large households while the housekeepers and maidservants busily prepared the necessities for celebrating the new year.

Within their kitchens, large fires blazed away as sounds of stir-frying resounded incessantly and the fragrance of dishes swirled about and lingered in the air for a long time.

Plates after plates of exquisite dishes were cooked and served on their dining tables. The numerous member of large households would gather together for the reunion dinner.

The mood of the Spring Festival was festive and lively.

At Fang Fang's Little Store, Bu Fang removed a doorboard and stepped out of the store. The alleyway was quiet and desolate. Even the moonlight which was warmer than usual could not disperse the hint of emptiness in the alleyway.

He dragged a chair toward the entrance of the store and sat down upon it. The store was not opened for business but he still sat there as usual. As the winter wind blew into the store and struck his face, he could not help but tuck his head into his shoulders.

Under the cold moonlight, a person, a chair, and a dog seemed to be out of tune with the festiveness outside of the alleyway.

Bang!

A stream of fireworks flew into the air and blossomed in the pitch-black night sky.

"Oh, how beautiful," Bu Fang thought.

Suddenly, a series of footsteps came from the alleyway. Bu Fang immediately looked toward the entrance of the alleyway in puzzlement and saw three figures slowly approaching.

Xiao Yanyu and Xiao Xiaolong were walking hand in hand with the sprightly Ouyang Xiaoyi. That night, Xiao Yanyu was not wearing a veil and her peerless facial features were in full view. Her milky white skin seemed to be faintly shimmering under the illumination of the moonlight.

"Smelly boss, we're here to bring food to you!" Ouyang Xiaoyi said with a smile.

Xiao Yanyu exhibited the graceful bearing of a young lady from a prestigious family as usual. She was wearing a dress made from silk with a faint smile on her lips while holding a lunch box in her hand.

"Tsk, tsk. Owner Bu, are you admiring the fireworks? What a leisure mood you're in! However, I have to say, your store is an excellent spot for viewing fireworks!" Xiao Xiaolong said with a smile as he dragged a few chairs out from the store on his own and placed them next to the entrance, while he himself sat down next to Bu Fang.

Bu Fang was somewhat bewildered as he looked at the three of them. He thought, "What's going on? They're here to bring food to me?"

Xiao Yanyu gently smiled and said, "Tomorrow is the Spring Festival and tonight is the time for a reunion dinner. Since Owner

Bu appears to be alone, we thought that you might perhaps be feeling lonely. Therefore, we brought some food here. This pastry was personally made by my mother as appreciation for your favor."

As Xiao Yanyu spoke, she gracefully sat down on a chair and placed the lunch box in front of Bu Fang.

As the lid of the lunch box was removed, a faint fragrance immediately wafted out. Even though it was not as strong as Bu Fang's dishes, the refreshing fragrance was rather pleasant as well.

Layers after layers of exquisite and aesthetically-pleasing pastries were taken out.

"Here, give this a try. This was personally made by my mother," Xiao Yanyu said with a smile on her lips as she looked at Bu Fang while holding a plate of pastries in her hands.

Bu Fang seriously gave the three of them a glance. He suddenly felt a warm feeling in his chest and the corners of his lips curled up.

As he picked up one of the pastries and gently took a bite, his eyes immediately lit up. The taste of the pastry was extremely delicious. It was sweet, but not sickly sweet. Furthermore, it broke into pieces upon entering his mouth. The texture was extremely good as well. In addition, the filling inside was still emitting a hint of warmth, like the warmth of eating honey.

"Not bad," Bu Fang praised, even though from his perspective, there was still quite a number of flaws in this pastry.

Xiao Yanyu's eyes immediately lit up, thinking it was rare to hear a word of praise from Owner Bu. Both Xiao Xiaolong and Ouyang Xiaoyi eagerly grabbed a piece of pastry as well and stuffed them in their mouths. And so, the four of them sat in a circle and ate delicious food.

The warm ambience immediately dispersed much of the coldness within the alleyway.

"Owner Bu, try this plate of Pineapple Jade Heart Cake!" Finally, Xiao Yanyu took out a place of pastries from the lunch box and offered them to Bu Fang with a face filled with expectations.

Chapter 143: The Thousand Wrapped Silk Year Cake

"Does it taste good?" Xiao Yanyu nervously asked. The light in her eyes became brighter as she watched Bu Fang take a bite of the Pineapple Jade Heart Cake.

Bu Fang knitted his eyebrows together. As he savored the flavor of this pineapple cake that tasted slightly odd, a hint of strangeness appeared on his face... He thought, "Was this really made by the same person? The difference in the taste is a little too wide..."

"This... doesn't taste too good. It's too sweet. Furthermore, the fillings became too hard after being steamed for too long. Moreover..."

Bu Fang subconsciously began pointing out the flaws. His attitude toward food was serious. Therefore, he would talk non-stop once he started giving his assessment.

Xiao Xiaolong and Ouyang Xiaoyi were dumbfounded and the corners of their lips twitched as they watched Bu Fang become more and more enthusiastic as he continued with his assessment..

"Stop eating then! Since it's so awful!" Xiao Yanyu's pretty face flushed red in an instant and a dark cloud-like redness appeared on her cheeks. She was incomparably beautiful when she looked both angry and embarrassed.

She snatched the Pineapple Jade Heart Cake back and placed it back into the lunch box in a fit of pique.

Bu Fang was bewildered. He thought, "What's going on? Was there something wrong with my assessment? There shouldn't be... This pineapple cake is really awful-tasting. It's obviously made by a beginner."

It was not on the same level as the pastries from before...

"Oh... Not on the same level?" Bu Fang thought and went into a daze for a moment before his gaze subconsciously landed on Xiao Yanyu. He immediately noticed her eyes were filled with resentment.

Bu Fang was not a fool and soon understood what was going on. This pineapple cake was definitely made by Xiao Yanyu and not her mother... This would also explain why there was a large difference in the flavor.

When Xiao Xiaolong and Ouyang Xiaoyi saw the somewhat embarrassed expression on Bu Fang's face under Xiao Yanyu's sulking stare, they could no longer endure it and burst out laughing.

"Owner Bu, it's rare for my elder sister to cook something and you actually criticized the pastries that she elaborately prepared to the point where they sound completely worthless. You've really offended my sister this time round," Xiao Xiaolong said with a laugh.

Bu Fang pursed his lips. The pineapple cake was indeed awful-tasting. Even though it was made by Xiao Yanyu, he was not accustomed to flattering others...

However, the fact that the three of them would visit him on this night warmed his formerly lonely heart. He felt that he needed to do something to express his gratitude.

"How about cooking some dishes for them?" Bu Fang thought before he shook his head and then tossed this idea out of his mind. The three of them frequently patronized his store and thus were well acquainted with his dishes. Therefore, cooking the store's dishes would not be sincere enough.

"Tonight is the night before the Spring Festival, which has the same meaning as New Year's Eve on Earth," Bu Fang thought for a moment before he got up from his seat and headed toward the interior of the store.

"Give me a moment, I'll prepare something to celebrate tonight," Bu Fang said as he headed toward the kitchen.

Owner Bu was going to cook something for them? The eyes of Xiao Yanyu, Xiao Xiaolong, and Ouyang Xiaoyi all lit up.

Bu Fang's culinary skill was, needless to say, extraordinary, and the dishes he cooked were unforgettable. For the first time ever, he was offering to cook for them... They were immediately filled with expectation.

After waiting for a short while, Bu Fang walked out of the kitchen with a large basin in his hand.

The three of them were immediately perplexed. What was Owner Bu planning to do?

Bu Fang did not dispel their doubts and instead placed the large basin in front of them.

The weight of the basin was evidently not light and the basin was also filled with glutinous rice flour. This rice flour was crystal-clear and looked like crystal powder.

Bu Fang poured boiling spirit spring water into the basin and then used his hand to stir the mixture.

"Owner Bu, what are you planning to make?" Xiao Xiaolong asked as he puzzledly looked at Bu Fang.

Bu Fang gave him a glance and said, "Don't say anything, just watch."

Thereafter, as Bu Fang raised his fist, true energy surged forth from his dantian and enveloped his hand like a glove.

Bang! A loud noise rang out as Bu Fang's fist swiftly smashed into the eddy inside of the basin. With Bu Fang's precise control over his true energy, the eddy trembled for a moment.

Bu Fang pulled his fist back and then it smashed downward once more. A loud noise rang out like the sound of a breaking mirror.

The three of them were astounded as they watched Bu Fang's violent and fierce actions. They thought, "Is he really making food? Are you sure he's not venting his anger? Just imagine if those fists were landing on a person's body..."

After an unknown amount of punches, Bu Fang's actions gradually became less wild and even became slightly gentle. Although every punch would still produce a thunderous noise.

"This... Good heavens!" Xiao Xiaolong cried out in astonishment as he stared at Bu Fang's fist that was enveloped with true energy. He saw white silk-like threads attached to Bu Fang's true energy.

As Bu Fang raised his hand, numerous threads were connected to his fist. Each and every thread was glossy and even thinner and softer than the finest silk.

Bang.

After the final punch landed, Bu Fang stopped moving and dispersed his true energy. He raised his fist and the threads stuck on it disappeared as well. The three of them immediately looked into the basin in curiosity and saw a large piece of crystal-clear glutinous rice block that was still emitting steam.

Even though there was no trace of any fragrance, the three of them could not help but swallow their saliva...

"Smelly boss... This is a dish made using your fist? Is it edible?" Ouyang Xiaoyi asked.

"It's edible, but it'll be even tastier after processing," Bu Fang said. "You can actually try making it at home yourself, as long as you can control your true energy well enough."

"What's the name of this food?" Xiao Yanyu's melodious voice rang out.

"Thousand Wrapped Silk Year Cake," Bu Fang replied.

Thereafter, Bu Fang raised his hand and the Dragon Bone

Kitchen Knife appeared. After twirling it around, he sliced the year cake into four equal pieces.

Back in the kitchen, Bu Fang placed them onto a blue and white porcelain plate before letting it steam in a bamboo steamer.

"Come in," Bu Fang yelled toward the three who were still sitting at the entrance.

The three of them immediately came into the store in excitement and saw the Thousand Wrapped Silk Year Cake placed on the table.

Its appearance was plain and simple. The three of them could not tell what was so different about it.

However, the smell was...The rich fragrance of the glutinous rice was accompanied with a sweet aroma and lingered around the tip of their noses like silk.

The sweetness was not sickly sweet and not faint either. It aroused their appetite in a just nice manner and made them salivate without even noticing.

"Have a try. This year cake should be eaten on the night before the Spring Festival to wish for steady improvements in the coming new year," Bu Fang said.

The ingredients used for the Thousand Wrapped Silk Year Cake was specially bought by Bu Fang from the system and paid for using his crystals. However, Bu Fang did not care about that.

The sentiment behind their visit was not something that mere crystals could compare with. The only way he could express his gratitude was cooking for them.

Xiao Yanyu gracefully picked up a Thousand Wrapped Silk Year Cake with her chopsticks. Her glossy lips softly parted and revealed her pearly white teeth as she gently took a bite.

Thereafter, Xiao Yanyu's beautiful eyes widened and were filled with incredulity.

So, the so-called Thousand Wrapped Silk... was truly a Thousand Wrapped Silk!

Chapter 144: Overlapping of the Two Moons and the Arrival of the Spring Festival

As the Thousand Wrapped Silk Year Cake entered her mouth, Xiao Yanyu felt as if she was biting a sponge and each and every layer of this particular sponge was incomparably soft. The silk-like texture of the year cake rubbing against her pearly white teeth and red lips made her feel as if she was being caressed by a soft breeze and caused her body to shudder.

A sweet flavor suddenly spread within Xiao Yanyu's mouth and the year cake seemed to have unfurled like a bundle of loose threads in that instant. It continuously bounced and struck the back of her mouth as if giving an extremely pleasurable and gentle massage.

The sweetness enveloped her tastebuds and slowly permeated her mouth inch by inch. Its speed was not fast but made Xiao Yanyu feel as if the entire world had become sweet.

Within an instant, Xiao Yanyu's face became flushed and her body subconsciously fidgeted for a moment. She was behaving in a somewhat unnatural manner. After taking a bite of this Thousand Wrapped Silk Year Cake that entered her mouth, she felt as if the clothes on her had fallen apart like the year cake in her mouth...

How embarrassing!

Xiao Xiaolong experienced the same thing as Xiao Yanyu. When Bu Fang gave him a glance, he saw that Xiao Xiaolong's face was flushed red as well... Bu Fang was dumbfounded by his bashful appearance.

"How delicious!"

Ouyang Xiaoyi was the first to praise out loud with a joyful expression on her face. She thought, "Getting to eat the smelly boss' new dish is practically the greatest happiness. Furthermore,

this dish is so delicious..."

"Don't be in such a hurry, you guys should continue sampling the taste. You haven't experienced the actual flavors yet," Bu Fang said as he himself took a bite of a Thousand Wrapped Silk Year Cake.

The three of them were immediately surprised. Could there really be something else different about this Thousand Wrapped Silk Year Cake?

The three of them immediately took another bite in suspicion. After taking a few more bites, they were gradually astounded by its soft sweetness.

As Bu Fang quietly savored the year cake in his mouth, the expression on his face became somewhat empty and his gaze became distant and deep...

[Thousand Wrapped Silk](#) was not just silk wrapped together but also worry. This was the hidden meaning behind the name of Bu Fang's dish. These year cakes were personally made by Bu Fang punch by punch and contained all of his emotions.

This was a dish filled with emotions.

As Ouyang Xiaoyi continued eating, her eyes became somewhat watery. She did not know why, but her eyes were welling up with tears and an indescribable sadness was gathering in her chest.

This feeling was strange. It was just like nostalgia as well as loneliness...

Xiao Yanyu and Xiao Xiaolong ate the year cakes without saying a word but the expressions on their faces showed that they were affected by the emotions within the year cakes as well.

They quietly ate the year cakes and soon finished everything.

The taste was good and lingered within their memories. However, the waves of emotions were making their eyes well up with tears.

"Sis... After eating this year cake, why do I recall the three years when mother was lying on bed? I suddenly feel so sad," Xiao Xiaolong said.

Xiao Yanyu closed her eyes and took a deep breath. Thereafter, she opened her eyes and said with a radiant smile, "My silly brother, isn't mother already awake?"

Xiao Yanyu tasted the emotions within this Thousand Wrapped Silk Cake. However, she knew that this was not the emotions that Bu Fang wanted to express. Bu Fang himself might be the only person who could taste the actual flavor of this Thousand Wrapped Silk Cake.

"When you get home, give my thanks to your mother. The pastries were delicious," Bu Fang said as he stood at the doorway. After finishing the Thousand Wrapped Silk Year Cake, it was time for the three to return.

Xiao Yanyu was rather surprised as she responded with a beautiful smile. She thought, "Owner Bu actually knows how to thank someone? How strange."

"Hmm, alright. I'll tell our mother. It's rare for someone to be praised by Owner Bu for their culinary skills," Xiao Yanyu said.

Bu Fang broke into a grin as he watched their disappearing back figure and softly muttered, "That's right, it would not be that bad if her skill at kneading the dough was better and control over the heat during the steaming process was better."

Bu Fang's muttering was not loud but it was really obvious inside of the quiet alleyway.

Within the darkness, Xiao Yanyu's figure staggered for a moment... She thought, "Fine, so Owner Bu is someone who knows how to be polite."

The alleyway regained its serenity once more. As Bu Fang looked up at the two silverish, circular plates in the sky that were working

hard to give off light, the corners of his lips curled up. He went back into the store and placed the doorboards back in place.

...

"My host, the system reward has already been released. Please check the reward," the system's solemn voice sounded out.

Bu Fang was wiping off the water droplets on his hands as was suddenly surprised for a moment. After getting interrupted by the Ouyang family's visit, he even forgot to take a look at the system's reward.

He immediately focused his mind and began checking out the reward.

Host: Bu Fang

Gender: Male

True Energy Cultivation Level: Fifth Grade (Has already a level of simulating objects with true energy. As the God of Cooking in the fantasy world, the host can try simulating kitchen tools with your true energy and cook even more delicious dishes. Work hard, young man.)

Cooking Talents: One Star

Skills: Level Two Meteor Knife Technique (10/100), Level One Big Dipper Carving Technique (30/100)

Tools: Golden Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife (God of Cooking set)

God of Cooking overall rating: Junior Chef (Has already unlocked his talents. Finally capable of researching and cooking standalone dishes as well as using true energy to cook and process ingredients. Cutting and carving techniques have already stepped on the path toward becoming the God of Cooking.)

System Level: Five Stars (Conversion ratio is at seventy percent. The host is permitted to carry out the capture of ingredients.)

System reward: cooking method of Rainbow-colored Water

Dumplings and one fragment of the God of Cooking set (1/3)

After checking out his system panel, Bu Fang's gaze landed on the system's level up reward. He wanted to see what was the reward this time.

"Rainbow-colored Water Dumplings?" Bu Fang puzzledly asked.

Bu Fang knew very well that water dumpling was actually a type of dumpling but cooked with different methods. One type was steamed dumplings, while water dumplings were boiled. However, this Rainbow-colored Water Dumpling... Bu Fang was suddenly feeling somewhat curious.

However, he was not too surprised. Any recipe given to him by the system would definitely not disappoint him. The so-called Rainbow-colored Water Dumplings was bound to be something special.

Bu Fang suddenly had an impulse to go into the kitchen and make a serving of the Rainbow-colored Water Dumplings. However, after giving it a thought, he gave up in the end. The reason was that he used up quite an amount of true energy after cooking the Thousand Wrapped Silk Year Cake and was already feeling somewhat tired. Since his body was not in the best condition and the dish would be affected by that, he decided to go back into his room and sleep.

Maintaining a good rest was extremely important to Bu Fang, even if he was already a man who could be called Battle-King.

Outside the store, there were still fireworks filling up the sky above the alleyway and giving out bright rays of light.

On the streets of the imperial city, the children were still excitedly shouting and the festive mood of the Spring Festival was getting more and more intense.

That night's imperial city was particularly lively as everyone waited for the coming of the new year.

In the pitch-black night sky, the two silver plates were getting closer and closer. Once these two silver plates had completely overlapped each other, it meant the start of a new year and the official coming of the Spring Festival.

Bu Fang lay on his bed as he looked at the bright moons through the window. Suddenly, he felt an inexplicable sense of joy.

Finally, amidst the cheers of the citizens throughout the Light Wind Empire, these two bright moons completely overlapped each other and became a single silver plate.

The single round moon radiated brilliant rays of light.

Amidst fireworks blooming in the sky, the Spring Festival finally quietly arrived.

As Bu Fang watched the overlapping of the two bright moons, he let out a light breath on his bed and slowly closed his eyes.

Thousand Wrapped Silk (千缠丝) - This is a wordplay where the 丝 in 千缠丝 meant "white hair"(愁丝) instead of silk/thread/hair(丝). When taken literally, 愁丝 means worry silk/thread/hair.

Chapter 145: The Fat Person Eating a Chicken Drumstick and the Skinny Person with a Wok on His Back

As the dawn of the Spring Festival arrived, smoke rose from the chimneys of many households within the imperial city. The citizens who worked hard for the past year got up early and began preparing a sumptuous Spring Festival breakfast.

At one of the the imperial city's gates, the guards on watch yawned and enviously watched as the scenery within the city gradually become livelier. Although it was the Spring Festival, the city guards were still alertly carrying out their duties. Even though the sect rebels were sabotaged by the old emperor, no one knew whether the cunning members of the sects would strike again.

As guards, protecting their country was their duty.

However, their minds were currently filled with warm beds, their pretty wives and their adorable children, oh and also the piping hot Spring Festival breakfast prepared by their wives.

Suddenly, the eyes of a languid guard who was indulging in a beautiful fantasy abruptly became focused and he was immediately alert as he looked into the distance with a grave expression on his face.

In a distance, two figures—one large and one small—were slowly heading toward the imperial city and the guards could feel an invisible sense of pressure coming from them, which caused the complexions on the guards' faces to slightly change.

"Two Battle-King experts?" This city guard was appalled. For them, Battle-Kings were already illustrious figures.

"Crunch, crunch."

The sound of teeth crushing bones distinctly sounded out and

was even accompanied by the sound of chewing. The combination of the sounds sent chills up the spines of the two guards standing at the gate and caused goosebumps to rise all over their skins. They suddenly felt a sense of eeriness.

"Big bro, we've reached the imperial city," an indistinct voice rang out. After the sentence was finished, the sound of bones being chewed sounded out once more.

"You damn fatty, could you not speak to me when you're eating?!" The other voice seemed to be slightly annoyed and his tone was filled with revulsion.

"Crunch, crunch. Got it... Oh... Got it, I won't do it again. Crunch, crunch." An honest and foolish laughter accompanied by the sound of bones being chewed sounded out and was soon followed by the exasperated and frenzied grumbling of another person.

Within the field of vision of the two imperial city guards, the figures of the two gradually became clearer.

As they saw the two people, the pupils of the city guards shrunk at the same time.

One of them was tall and fat while the other was short and skinny. The tall one was extremely obese and his entire body was covered with chunks of flesh, so much so that his tiny eyes were almost hidden.

On the other hand, the short one was extremely thin. He had a protruding mouth with a sharp chin and looked rather... comical.

The fatty was wearing a large apron with a pocket sewn upon it. He reached his hand into the pocket and pulled out an overwhelmingly fragrant and glistening chicken drumstick before directly shoving the entire drumstick into his mouth. He did not even need to spit the bones out and swallowed the entire thing down after chewing a few times.

The short one was not normal either. He was not tall but was carrying a large black wok that was almost larger than him on his back and he looked as if he was a turtle carrying its shell.

"The two of you... Stop right there!" a guard imposingly said as he stopped them.

From a single glance, the guards could tell that the two of them were not normal. As city guards, it was their responsibility to stop and question them.

"Big bro, he's stopping us... Crunch, crunch," the fatty said as he pulled out another chicken drumstick from the front pocket of his apron, shoved it into his mouth and started chewed while sulkily looking at the shorty.

The shorty disdainfully gave the fatty a glance before he turned to the guard and said, "Hey, friend. We're chefs here to participate in this year's Hundred Family Banquet. We're from [Qingyangzhen](#)."

The guard was startled for a moment. He thought, "So these two strange fellows are chefs... Do the chefs these days all behave so strangely? He's even bringing his own wok to participate in the contest?"

The guard repeated Qingyangzhen a few times in his mind. Immediately after, his pupils shrunk and he seemed to have remembered something. He looked at the two in astonishment and said, "Qingyangzhen? Hmm? Are you talking about the Qingyangzhen that's also known as the entrance to the Wildlands?"

The shorty was very pleased with the guard's expression. He haughtily lifted his sharp chin and said, "Then, are we allowed to enter?"

The guard swallowed his saliva and moved sideway. This strange duo directly headed into the imperial city.

As the fatty walked past the guard, he stopped for a moment and broke into a grin. The thick flesh on his face trembled for a moment.

"Friend, you're not a bad person. You're actually letting us go in. Here, I'll give you half of this chicken drumstick." The fatty pulled out a chicken drumstick from his apron and placed it in his mouth. His large white teeth bit down with a crunch and directly divided the chicken drumstick into two halves.

As he chewed half of the chicken drumstick in his mouth, he gave the remaining half to the guard.

The guard accepted the drumstick in astonishment and stared at the two of them blankly as they entered the imperial city.

Once the fatty was gone, the guard suddenly recovered from his surprise and threw the chicken drumstick onto the ground with an expression filled with revulsion.

"Chefs from Qingyangzhen, I remember that the chefs from there are all very scary!" the guard softly muttered to himself as a hint of fear appeared on his face.

...

"Crunch, crunch. Big bro, why are we here to participate in this year's Hundred Family Banquet? If we're going to attend such a boring event, we might as well use the time to eat a few more chicken drumsticks. What's the point of competing with these mediocre chefs?" the fatty puzzledly asked in a mumble as he chewed on a chicken drumstick.

These two brothers were Ah Lu and Ah Wei. The fatty was called Ah Lu, while the skinny one was called Ah Wei. They were chefs from Qingyangzhen and were rather famous in that area. They studied their culinary skills under an elderly chef and often hunted spirit beasts in the Wildlands. Their dishes were bold but also delicious at the same time.

Even though their reputation was unknown in the Light Wind Empire, there was no one who did not know them within Qingyangzhen.

"I've already said before, don't talk to me when you're eating! How many times do I have to tell you?! Hmph... The old man is the one who told us to participate. He said the prize reward for the Hundred Family Banquet might be pretty good this year and hoped that we would present it to him. If that wasn't the case, do you really think with my personality that I would choose to participate?" Ah Wei said with a disgusted snort as he lifted his sharp chin.

"What's the prize reward? Did the old man tell you?" Ah Lu swallowed the remnants of the chicken drumstick mixed with bones in his mouth and then curiously stared at Ah Wei with his tiny eyes.

"How would I know?" Ah Wei let out a snort and continued walking forward with the large black wok on his back.

Ah Lu went into a daze for a moment and then continued to reach into the front pocket of his apron. He pulled a greasy and fragrant chicken drumstick out and shoved it into his mouth. The apron's pocket seemed to be a bottomless pit and the chicken drumsticks seemed to be inexhaustible.

Afterward, Ah Lu gleefully ran after Ah Wei's back figure.

"Crunch, crunch. Big bro, where are we going now? Are we going to the empire's designated location prepared for chefs?" Ah Lu asked in a mumble.

Immediately after, Ah Wei's exasperated voice rang out once more. "Get lost! I told you not to talk to me when you're eating!"

"What are we going there for? What's the point of gathering with a bunch of trashy chefs? Let's go and look for something to eat!" Ah Wei said.

...

Bu Fang got up from bed on time as usual. After washing up, he slapped his own cheeks to wake himself up.

Last night's sleep was exceptionally well and allowed both his body and mind to completely relax. It was the most stable sleep he had ever since he came to this world.

When he arrived at the kitchen, Bu Fang began to practice his carving and cutting techniques in a skillful manner. There was already a large improvement to his carving technique since he first started. He could even carve out a realistic-looking flower with extremely smooth curvatures using a soft and tender tofu.

On the other hand, the improvements toward his cutting technique become somewhat slower. After all, the Meteor Cutting Technique had already risen to the second level and its difficulty had grown larger as well.

When the usual morning practice ended, Bu Fang began cooking some dishes. The first dish he cooked was obviously the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs, which was Blacky's favorite. Just for that day, Bu Fang even specially increased the amount so that the lazy dog could have its fill.

After all, it was the Spring Festival...

A short while later, a rich fragrance wafted out from the kitchen. The fragrance was so aromatic that it was mesmerizing.

After bringing out a plate filled to the brim with Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs, Bu Fang removed a door board and the cold air outside immediately rushed into the store.

Despite the festive mood of the Spring Festival, the temperature did not increase even in the slightest. As he exhaled a cloud of white breath, Bu Fang placed the piping hot Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs that was giving off a mesmerizing fragrance in front of Blacky.

Blacky, who was originally lazily lying on the ground,

immediately opened its eyes and excitedly got up with its tongue hanging out.

"Perhaps, this gluttonous dog would only reveal such an appearance while eating Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs!" Bu Fang thought.

Just when Bu Fang placed the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs in front of Blacky, he suddenly heard two distinctly different sets of footsteps coming from behind him...

"Crunch, crunch. Oh... Big bro, there's a store over here! Eh? This meaty aroma... It smells really good!"

Bu Fang stood up. Before he could even turn around, the sound of bones being chewed and an indistinct voice suddenly shouted in surprise from behind him.

Qingyangzhen (青阳镇) - It literally means green sun town. There's an actual town called Qingyangzhen in the province of Jiangsu in China.

Chapter 146: Lil' Doggy, Is It Possible for Us to Trade My Chicken Drumstick for Your Sweet 'N' Sour Ribs?

Ah Lu went into a daze as he stared blankly at the steaming plate of tangerine Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs in front of the big black dog. He forgot about the half-eaten chicken drumstick in his hand and even forgot to chew the meat in his mouth.

This Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs smelled really delicious. It was much more aromatic than the roast meat made by the old man from Qingyangzhen who taught them how to cook. With such a comparison, Ah Lu felt the chicken drumstick in his hand had become somewhat bland and tasteless.

Ah Lu gave the chicken drumstick in his hand a glance and then broke into a grin. He still shoved the chicken drumstick into his mouth and swallowed it after chewing a few times.

The big black dog was just about to heartily enjoy the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs on its own when its body suddenly trembled for a moment. It immediately raised its head and discovered Ah Lu's staring gaze. That gaze was filled with greed and yearning and its target was the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs.

"How dare this human covet this lord dog's Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs?!" Blacky was furious! It immediately stood up and blocked the view of the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs with its body. With its buttocks facing Ah Lu, it rather proudly wagged its tail.

With his line of sight obstructed, Ah Lu could only reluctantly give up on chasing the food with his eyes. After he smacked his lips, he ran his tongue over his lips as if he was attempting to lick the fragrance of the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs wafting in the air.

"Put your tongue back in your mouth, could you not behave like a chef who's inexperienced with the ways of the world? If you're

going to act like this, please don't tell anyone that you're my brother!" Ah Wei knitted his eyebrows together and his face was almost scrunched together from revulsion. Even though he had to admit that the fragrance of the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs was really not bad... his reaction was not as pathetic as Ah Lu's.

Bu Fang turned around when he heard the voices behind him. With his eyebrows raised, he looked at the two strange people in surprise.

One of them was a large and fat person wearing an apron and the other was a skinny person with a large black wok on his back...

"What an unique duo, are they here to cause trouble?" Bu Fang thought.

"Who are you guys?" Bu Fang asked.

After receiving a scolding from Ah Wei, Ah Lu immediately pulled his tongue back into his mouth with much reluctance while still reminiscing the aroma of the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs.

Ah Wei was somewhat puzzled as he gave Bu Fang a glance. After suspiciously sizing Bu Fang up from top to bottom, he opened his mouth and asked, "Are you the one who made this Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs?"

This was a dish that possessed the finest presentation, aroma, and flavor. Without even having a careful observation, Ah Wei dared to conclude that this was definitely a classic and excellent plate of Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs!

However, how could a chef who appeared to be younger than him cook such an outstanding Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs? Impossible... Ah Wei subconsciously shook his head. He was extremely confident of his own culinary skill. Ever since he was trained by the old man, the level of his culinary skill had been swiftly rising. There was definitely no way an ordinary chef could be better than him.

"I don't believe you, you're lying... Go and get the real chef," Ah

Wei said as he gave Bu Fang a glance.

Bu Fang was surprised for a moment and looked at Ah Wei as if he was looking at an idiot. What did he mean by get the real chef? Bu Fang was standing right there, who else was he looking for?

Bu Fang could not be bothered to deal with such an unreasonable person. He immediately went back into the store and headed into the kitchen.

Ah Wei knitted his eyebrows together as he looked at Bu Fang's back figure. Did he make a mistake? That speechless gaze Bu Fang gave him before turning around made him question his life...

"Let's go, Ah Lu. Let's take a look inside this store," Ah Wei lifted his sharp chin and said with a faint smile.

"I didn't think we would encounter such an interesting store when we just arrived at the imperial city," Ah Wei said to himself. However, after waiting for a long while, there was still no response from Ah Lu. He immediately turned around in puzzlement and saw Ah Lu wriggling toward Blacky in tiny steps while continuously pulling out chicken drumsticks from his apron's pocket.

"Cute lil' doggy, why don't we exchange two pieces of my chicken drumsticks for a piece of your Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs? Two pieces is not enough? How about three pieces? Four pieces?"

While wriggling forward, the flesh on Ah Lu's face was quivering as well. He was really bewitched by the smell of the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs. The thing that Ah Lu liked to do the most was eating and he was especially sensitive about eating meat.

When Ah Wei turned around and saw this scene, his lungs almost burst from exasperation. He immediately shouted in anger, "What the hell are you doing! Hurry up and get over here!"

When Ah Lu heard Ah Wei's bellow, he was somewhat reluctant as he walked toward Ah Wei. In the end, the two of them stepped into the store.

The layout within the store was very cozy. At least, it gave Ah Lu and Ah Wei a pretty good first impression, especially the store's hygiene. That spotless feeling made them very happy.

Ah Lu shoved the four pieces of chicken drumsticks in his hands into his mouth in one go and brutally chomped down in frustration. With a loud crunch, he swallowed all of the chicken drumsticks and said, "Bi... Big bro! Look at the menu behind you!"

Hearing his words, Ah Wei turned around and looked. His eyebrows rose up in an instant and he immediately swore out loud, "God damn... This store really is a rip-off, it's even more of a rip-off than our store!"

Their store was set up at Qingyangzhen because it was situated at the entrance of the Wildlands. The prices of their dishes were extremely expensive, but they were expensive for a reason. All of the ingredients used in their dishes were personally obtained by them from the Wildlands. Furthermore, after being carefully cooked by them, the spirit energy within the ingredients could be preserved. Not only was the taste of their dishes good, they were even beneficial toward one's cultivation. This was the true reason why they were selling their food at such expensive rates.

However, what was this store's basis for selling their dishes at such an expensive rate as well? Was the owner of this store personally obtaining ingredients from the Wildlands too?

Nevertheless, even if he was personally obtaining the ingredients on his own, the prices of his dishes were still outrageously expensive. At their store, they had dishes that were priced in crystals but there were only a few of such dishes. On the other hand, almost every single dish in this store was priced in crystals...

Gulp.

Ah Wei was somewhat unable to accept the pricing.

"Where's the owner?! I want to make an order!" Ah Wei shouted.

Bu Fang slowly walked out of the kitchen and gave Ah Wei a glance. Indignation was fully displayed on the other party's face and his expression even contained a slight provocation.

"Oh, what do you want to order, tell me," Bu Fang expressionlessly said.

"Big bro, let's order the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs! I really want to eat that..." Ah Lu said in a mumble beside him.

"Don't talk to me when you're eating!" Ah Wei grumbled while giving Ah Lu a glance. Honestly speaking, he was slightly tempted by Ah Lu's suggestion, but he managed to endure the temptation in the end.

"We'll have two servings of Egg-Fried Rice. You can only tell a chef's level from the simplest dish... Besides, the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs is so expensive. If it doesn't taste good, our money would be wasted!" Ah Wei said.

Bu Fang broke into a grin as he gave these two weird brothers a glance. Without saying anything else, he only told them to wait a moment before he went back into the kitchen.

Ah Lu and Ah Wei found a table and sat down. Even though the environment within the store was completely different from outside and filled their hearts with warmth, the furnishing of the store was actually not luxurious at all and was just like an extremely ordinary store.

"Big bro, other people are having lavish meals on Spring Festival while we're only eating Egg-Fried Rice here... Why don't we order a serving of Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs as well? Otherwise, Red Braised Meat is acceptable too..." Ah Lu said as he swallowed another chicken drumstick.

"Hmph... Do you really plan on donating all of the crystals in your purse to this store? Are you stupid?!" Ah Wei said with a sneer.

He was in a huff as he sat on the chair with the large black wok on his back.

Ah Lu's face was filled with disappointment as his body trembled in frustration. "I can't eat any meat... I'm so sad," Ah Lu muttered to himself. Afterward, he pulled out two pieces of chicken drumsticks and shoved them into his mouth before fiercely chewing them.

Suddenly, the crunching noises in his mouth abruptly stopped and his nose twitched violently. His gaze immediately gave off an intense brightness as he looked in the direction of the kitchen.

There, a slender figure was slowly walking out with two plates of piping hot Egg-Fried Rice.

Chapter 147: The Hundred Family Banquet's Preparations

"This aroma..."

Ah Lu swallowed all of the chicken drumsticks in his mouth in one gulp. His gaze was already focused on the Egg-Fried Rice in Bu Fang's hands.

From a distance, the Egg-Fried Rice looked like it was radiating golden rays of extremely eye-dazzling lights and had completely attracted their eyes and attention.

The fragrance of the egg and aroma of the rice wafting in the air blended together and flowed into the nostrils of Ah Lu and Ah Wei, causing mesmerized expressions to appear on their faces.

When Bu Fang placed the plates of Egg-Fried Rice before them, Ah Lu eagerly grabbed his spoon and started digging in.

He was simply enticed beyond his limits by the fragrance of the Egg-Fried Rice. The fragrance of the eggs was in fact an aroma that was extremely capable of arousing a person's appetite.

As the spoon scooped a spoonful of rice and created a hole in the mound of Egg-Fried Rice, the flowing egg which was eighty percent cooked left a string-like trail. However, the aroma trapped within the rice instantly gushed out through the hole and enveloped Ah Lu in its fragrance.

"Hmm..." Ah Lu let out a moan and then immediately shoved the spoonful of rice into his mouth. His eyes, which were almost hidden by the layers of fat on his face, suddenly widened.

After swallowing down the rice, he excitedly looked toward Ah Wei and said in disbelief, "Big bro... This Egg-Fried Rice is really delicious!"

"The eggs used in this dish should be from the third grade spirit

beast, Thunderstorm Pigeon. However, the quality of the rice is also very good and it's not any inferior to the spirit energy rice meticulously grown by the old man. Furthermore, the degree of control over the heat is really high. The egg that's eighty percent cooked was able to rely on its own temperature after leaving the wok to instantly harden after entering one's mouth. This requires extremely precise calculation! Oh... In short, it's delicious!"

Ah Lu said in a muffled voice. After he was done speaking, he eagerly entered into a battle with the Egg-Fried Rice.

Bu Fang was slightly surprised. His heart was slightly stirred as he watched the fatty who was engrossed in devouring his food. This fatty was actually able to figure out the important cooking procedures and techniques of cooking the Egg-Fried Rice from just a single tasting. Furthermore, he even knew the origins of these ingredients and was basically correct in his deductions.

Without a doubt, this made it clear to him about the fatty's identity. He was a chef as well, and not just any ordinary chef.

Ah Wei was shocked as well as he looked at Ah Lu. He understood clearly how picky his younger brother was about dishes without meat. He could be very lenient about dishes with meat but was extremely picky when it came to dishes without meat.

Ah Wei's Egg-Fried Rice had arrived as well, but he was not impatient like Ah Lu. Instead, he carefully admired the presentation and aroma of the Egg-Fried Rice first. Only then did he begin savoring the taste of this Egg-Fried Rice.

The taste of the Egg-Fried Rice had really exceeded Ah Wei's expectations. It was so delicious that he was bewildered. However, those were not the main point. The main point was that the Egg-Fried Rice actually contained a rich amount of spirit energy.

"Why does this Egg-Fried Rice contain so much spirit energy? This is completely illogical," Ah Wei thought.

Therefore, under Ah Lu's surprised gaze, Ah Wei ordered another dish...

After ordering a few more of Bu Fang's dishes, Ah Wei completely understood the reason for the store's high pricing because all of these dishes actually contained spirit energy. Furthermore, the concentration of the spirit energy had completely exceeded Ah Wei's expectation. The density of the spirit energy was even higher than the dishes they were selling at their store.

"You're welcome to come back next time," Bu Fang said, after keeping the crystals, toward the back figures of the two brothers who were stepping out of the store.

The two brothers, Ah Lu and Ah Wei, silently walked out of the store and stepped into the world filled with snow. Ah Lu had even stopped eating his chicken drumsticks and some solemnity had appeared in their eyes.

If Bu Fang was participating in this year's Hundred Family Banquet as well, according to the level of the dishes they had just eaten, the two of them basically did not even have the slightest chance of getting first place if they do not give their all... Bu Fang was giving them too much pressure.

"No wonder the old man said that the continent is teeming with talented individuals and told us not to be too conceited. We've only just arrived at the imperial city and we're already put in our place," Ah Wei thought.

"Big bro, now that we've met Owner Bu, I feel like we're going to lose..." Ah Lu said, seemingly having no confidence at all.

Ah Wei stopped walking and his sharp chin tilted upward as he earnestly said, "Therefore, we'll have to get serious... At first, I thought we could obtain first place without putting in any effort. Now it seems that it's not as simple as we imagined!"

As he straightened his back, Ah Wei took off the large black wok

off his back and smashed the wok into the ground, causing the ground to slightly shake and sink a little.

"Let's give it our all. If we want to obtain first place, we'll need to demonstrate our actual culinary skills. Otherwise, we're not even qualified to compete with Owner Bu!" Ah Wei said.

Seeing the grave look on Ah Wei's face, the layers of fat on Ah Lu's face trembled and his expression became solemn as well. As he reached his hand into the pocket of his apron, he pulled out a chicken drumstick and solemnly shoved it into his mouth and started chewing...

...

The festive mood of the Spring Festival was still enveloping the entire imperial city, or perhaps the entire Light Wind Empire.

Each and every household was joyously preparing entire tables of sumptuous Spring Festival food in order to reward themselves for working hard for an entire year and allow themselves to experience the delights of delicious food.

Meanwhile, at the Gate of Heavenly Mystery, the preparations for the Hundred Family Banquet were being hurriedly readied. Large tables were carried out and placed on the plaza grounds before bright red tablecloths were laid upon them.

As the standard of this year's Hundred Family Banquet was raised because of Ji Chengxue, no one dared to be careless and the preparation workload was heavier than previous years.

The main area of the Gate of Heavenly Mystery was densely packed with tables, while simple cooking stoves were set up in the inner area. They were specially prepared for the chefs, so that they could prepare their dishes in full view of the guests.

This would undoubtedly test the actual skill level of the chefs. However, the chefs who would dare to participate in the Hundred Family Banquet were all well-known within the Light Wind

Empire. There was naturally no need to worry about their capabilities and they too were confident of their own skills.

While these preparations were going on, various types of dazzling ingredients were also being brought out. The dishes that were going to be cooked by each chef were different, so there were all sorts of ingredients as well.

Since that day was the Spring Festival, the store's business was not too good. Therefore, Bu Fang was languidly curled up on his chair and feeling extremely pleased as he drank from a cup of warm water in his hand.

However, when some travel-worn eunuchs rushed into his store, Bu Fang knew he was about to get busy.

"Owner Bu, may I know which ingredients you require? Please tell me, so that I could send someone to purchase them," a young eunuch respectfully said. This young eunuch was originally one of Lian Fu's close aides, so he did not dare to act impolitely in the slightest as he knew how terrifying Bu Fang was.

Bu Fang pondered for a moment. He was actually still mulling over the sort of meal he should cook during the Hundred Family Banquet.

Since it was the Hundred Family Banquet, the quantity of the food should be large enough. Otherwise, he would not be able to satisfy the requirement of a few hundred households... Therefore, Bu Fang concluded the main point of this year's Hundred Family Banquet: the dish he was going to cook needed both quality and quantity.

Therefore, choosing the right dish was extremely important for Bu Fang.

The guests attending the banquet were randomly selected from the commoners living within the imperial city. Many of them might not possess cultivation and there might not even be a shred

of true energy in their bodies. If Bu Fang cooked using high grade ingredients with spirit energy, the quality of his food would be guaranteed. However, not everyone would be able to consume his food. In the end, choosing to cook dishes with spirit energy would be arduous and fruitless.

Therefore, after much consideration, Bu Fang finally decided on the dish he was going to make.

Bu Fang beckoned toward the young eunuch and said, "Help me prepare these ingredients..."

Chapter 148: If Anyone Is Unhappy with Me, Let Him Come and Look for Me

"This is... Owner Bu, are you sure you only need these ingredients?" The young eunuch was dumbfounded after Bu Fang listed out the ingredients that he needed. That slightly childish face of his was filled with surprise and incredulity.

"That's right, I only need these. Get them ready, I'll be there early tomorrow," Bu Fang said.

The young eunuch was startled for a moment. "Owner Bu, are you not going today? Famous chefs from all over the Light Wind Empire are gathered together. With your culinary skills, you'll definitely receive admiration from many of the chefs."

Bu Fang indifferently gave the young eunuch a glance. He shook his head and said, "I am not going. I'll go to the Gate of Heavenly Mystery tomorrow morning. Just make sure that the ingredients I need are ready by then."

"Wh... What about those famous chefs? They kept saying that they want to get acquainted with you. If you don't go, you might offend them," the young eunuch kindly reminded Bu Fang with a conflicted expression on his face.

Hearing this, Bu Fang suddenly broke into a grin. He patted the young eunuch's shoulder and said, "Go back and tell them, if anyone is unhappy with me, they're welcomed to look for me."

"How awe-inspiring... As expected of the rumored owner of the black-hearted store, he's quirky indeed. However, that bunch of famous chefs hold the advantage of greater numbers... He's only putting himself at a disadvantage," the young eunuch thought with a sigh.

The young eunuch seemed to have seen through the vicissitudes of life. He let out a sigh before turning around to report back to the

palace.

As Bu Fang watched the disappearing back figure of the young eunuch, he lifted up the cup of water with both hands and took a sip of the water that was still emitting heat.

At that moment, Bu Fang was still, at the very least, a fifth grade Battle-King. Even though his combat ability might still be atrocious, it did not mean that he would allow others to bully him at will. He was uninterested in those so-called organizations and only wanted to cook his dishes in peace.

...

Inside of a luxurious inn in the imperial city.

Even though it was the day of the Spring Festival, this luxurious inn was still filled to capacity. It was reserved by the authorities as the accommodations for the famous chefs from regions throughout the empire.

Within the spacious lounge area of the luxurious inn, the area was currently crowded with a large group of people. There were men and women of various statures socializing with each other.

These people had all received invitation letters from the imperial palace. They were chefs from all over the empire that hurried over to the imperial city in order to participate in the Hundred Family Banquet. Each and every one of them was a famous chef in their towns and cities and their culinary skills were very good.

These chefs were all politely smiling as they greeted each other. They might not be familiar with one another but since they were already gathered here, they could naturally get acquainted with each other now and even help one another in the future.

However, the many chefs present were all actually encircling a few chefs standing in the center.

Those few chefs looked noticeably plump. With their wide bellies, they had wide smiles on their faces as they greeted the

people around them with a wine cup in hand. However, it was obvious that everyone else was looking at them in a somewhat reverent manner.

These people were none other than the head chefs of the imperial kitchen. Originally, they were all selected from all over the empire by Emperor Changfeng and were thus renown. Therefore, it was natural for them to be in a leading position now that they were mingling among those in the same profession.

"Chef Jin, the owner of the black-hearted store didn't come, like we expected," a middle-aged chef, with a somewhat round face and slightly chubby body, said as he raised his cup toward a bald man who appeared slightly younger than him. Even though he was smiling as he spoke, his eyes were noticeably filled with disdain.

The bald Chef Jin gave him a glance and only responded with a faint smile without saying anything.

Bu Fang's name was well-known among these chefs in the imperial city, especially the head chefs of the imperial kitchen. While the late emperor was still alive, his name was literally their nightmare.

Ever since the late emperor visited Fang Fang's Little Store, his taste preference became even harder to please. Almost every single day, many of the chefs would be reprimanded by their superiors.

The reason was their dishes were completely ignored by Emperor Changfeng as they were not to his liking.

During those days, the lives of these chefs were simply miserable. Every single day, they would have to think up a dish that could satisfy the emperor's taste buds...

"He's just a youngling who coincidentally cooked a dish that satisfied the late emperor's taste buds. Does he really think he's some kind of a top chef? Without years of experience, does he even know what real cooking is?" the bald Chef Jin said in disdain

before he finished the cup of wine in a single gulp.

From his point of view, Bu Fang was only a lucky chef who entered the good graces of the late emperor by coincidence. If it was not for the late emperor, could that Bu Fang even amount to anything? He would not even have the opportunity to enter the ken of the imperial chefs.

"Owner Bu will be participating in tomorrow's Hundred Family Banquet as well. We should definitely use this opportunity to teach this Owner Bu about the true taste of good food," another imperial chef said with a sneer, echoing the same sentiment.

"Does anyone know what ingredients Owner Bu has prepared? We should be able to determine the dish he's going to make from the ingredients," another chef said.

The eyes of many chefs in the surroundings immediately lit up after hearing his words.

Chef Jin rubbed his own bald head for a moment and then the corners of his lips curled up as he said, "Who cares? I am confident that I will definitely trounce that Owner Bu with my dish tomorrow."

"That's right, Chef Jin is right. When the time comes, we just need to reveal our identities as imperial chefs and we'll practically be undefeatable!" One of the chefs started laughing.

Within the imperial city, the reputation of the imperial chefs were well-known. In the eyes of the ordinary citizens, chefs from the imperial kitchen were representatives of good food. Any dish made by them would definitely be delicious because they were the ones cooking for the emperor!

Who was the emperor? He was the dragon among men, a supreme being. Someone who was capable of becoming his chef should naturally be more remarkable than most chefs.

"Even without revealing my identity as an imperial chef, I'll still

be able to effortlessly trounce him. He's just a little cook who got lucky, that's all. What's there to be afraid of?" Chef Jin was extremely confident of himself. His confidence was as bright as his bald head under the glare of sunlight.

"Chef Jin, Owner Bu may be nothing to worry about but we'll definitely need to pay some attention to the two brothers from Qingyangzhen. You might not have heard of them before, but they're famous food experts in the region around Qingyangzhen. The style of their dishes are very bold and the ingredients they use are very special as well. In short... they're very strong!" one of the chefs solemnly said.

Many of the other chefs sucked in a breath of cold air after hearing his words. They had evidently heard about the two brothers from Qingyangzhen before as well.

Chef Jin also narrowed his eyes and nodded. "Hmm, I've heard of them before as well. They're quite capable. However, the guests of the Hundred Family Banquet have different taste preferences compared to those Wildlands adventurers... Their chances of winning are low."

After hearing his words, the chefs one after another started praising Chef Jin's culinary skills and flattered each other as well. As the drinking party carried on, the night quietly passed by.

The next day, the first rays of light were just about to appear over the horizon.

At the Gate of Heavenly Mystery, the final part of the preparations and arrangements was almost finished. The guards were also positioned at their respective posts in order to ensure the guests would enter in an orderly manner. Furthermore, a spectator area was set up outside for those citizens who did not manage to obtain admission rights, so that they could watch the proceedings of the Hundred Family Banquet.

There was also an area that was specially put aside as a spectator

area within the Gate of Heavenly Mystery.

Within the spacious plaza of the Gate of Heavenly Mystery, three hundred banquet tables covered by red tablecloths were set up. From a distance, they looked like bright red flowers in full bloom.

Beside the banquet tables, rows of kitchen stoves were set up. The guests would be able to clearly observe the cooking process of each and every chef. This was a valuable chance for them to see famous chefs at work.

As the first ray of sunlight fell from the sky, a deafening sound of drums sounded out from the Gate of Heavenly Mystery.

Don don don!

Every single drumbeat seemed to be striking one's innermost being and caused their senses to tremble.

After the drumming stopped, the Gate of Heavenly Mystery opened and the citizens waiting outside slowly entered in an orderly manner.

The citizens of the three hundred lucky households found their respective tables and sat down with joyful expressions on their faces. With so many people living in the imperial city, it was natural for them to be ecstatic about getting chosen as one of the lucky households.

On the other hand, those citizens that were seated at the spectator area were somewhat envious as they looked at the people sitting at the banquet tables. What a blissful situation to be able to taste the dishes of so many famous chefs.

As another three drumbeats rang out, chefs wearing neat and tidy chef's uniforms entered with their heads held high and chest puffed out as they headed toward their respective kitchen stoves.

Outside the Gate of Heavenly Mystery, a slender figure was leisurely approaching with his hands held behind his back.

Chapter 149: Owner Bu Has Become Cocky

"Oh my, Owner Bu, you're participating in this year's Hundred Family Banquet as well! That's great, I'll be looking forward to your dish!"

As Bu Fang stepped into the Gate of Heavenly Mystery, he was suddenly greeted in an enthusiastic manner by a round meatball. A stunned expression immediately appeared on Bu Fang's face. What was Fatty Jin doing here? However, after thinking for a moment, his confusion resolved on its own. After all, there was no restriction in the random selection of the Hundred Family Banquet's guests. So it was not that surprising for Fatty Jin to be here as well.

"Owner Bu, this is my son and my daughter-in-law," Fatty Jin said with a smile as he pulled along his daughter-in-law and his son, who was round-looking like him.

Bu Fang nodded toward the gentle woman next to Fatty Jin. He was surprised that Fatty Jin could actually find such a gentle-looking woman for his son.

Their chat lasted briefly and Bu Fang was soon on his way toward a particular kitchen stove. The young eunuch from yesterday had already clearly informed him about the location of his kitchen stove, so he was able to easily find his own spot.

After reaching his kitchen stove, Bu Fang's eyebrows were immediately knitted together as he sized up the place. He let out a sigh internally. He was not in his store's kitchen after all... The kitchen stove was simply too crude but it was still not a hindrance for him.

A young eunuch was standing behind Bu Fang's kitchen stove. This young eunuch was specially assigned to help light the fire at Bu Fang's stove. There were young eunuchs like him standing behind the other stoves as well.

"Where are the ingredients that I asked for?" Bu Fang asked the young eunuch. The young eunuch immediately made a baffled expression and shook his head. Bu Fang mildly nodded in response. He was not so worried since he saw people carrying ingredients toward some of the other kitchen stoves. His ingredients should arrive soon enough.

Sure enough, the ingredients that Bu Fang needed were brought to him after a while.

The gaze of many of the chefs near Bu Fang were all focused on his location. They were very curious about the dish Bu Fang was going to make.

The bald-headed Chef Jin narrowed his eyes as he folded his arms across his chest and looked toward Bu Fang's location as well. The corners of his lips slightly curled up with a hint of disdain.

As a chef from the imperial kitchen, he had his own pride.

"Hmm?" Suddenly, Chef Jin's eyes widened and a surprised expression appeared on his face. There was simply too much variety in Bu Fang's ingredients. Furthermore, there were all sorts of colors... More importantly, none of them were high grade ingredients. There were only ordinary as well as exquisite ingredients. Some of them did not even contain spirit energy.

"Is Owner Bu planning to only use ordinary ingredients to make his dish? He's participating in this year's Hundred Family Banquet like this?" None of the chefs were able to make heads or tails of the situation.

In their own opinion, no matter how delicious a dish made from ordinary ingredients was, how could it compare with dishes made from high grade ingredients? Just the fragrance that formed from the spirit energy alone was enough to instantly defeat everything.

This Owner Bu was being really cocky! Was he looking down on them? Did he really plan to defeat them with a dish that only used

these ordinary ingredients?

One after another, many of the chefs revealed sneering expressions on their faces.

They were all looking forward to watching Bu Fang embarrass himself because once the cooking started, Bu Fang would understand the importance of using ingredients with spirit energy.

With the court musicians performing their music in the background, the mood in the Gate of Heavenly Mystery became even more festive. A group of guards marched out from the Main Hall and stood on both sides of the pathway as aristocrats, generals, and other court officials walked out after them while talking and laughing. Other than the commoners that were luckily selected, bigwigs living in the imperial city were naturally attending the Hundred Family Banquet as well while bringing along their families.

After all, there were not many opportunities for them to taste the cooking of chefs from all over the empire.

Ouyang Zongheng was sitting at one of the banquet tables with a smile on his face alongside Ouyang Xiaoyi as well as one of his wives. There were a lot of bigwigs at this particular banquet table, like members of the Xiao and Yang families... They were all families that were well-known in the imperial city.

In this year's Hundred Family Banquet, they were looking forward to Bu Fang's dish the most. The opportunity of eating Bu Fang's dishes outside of his store was even more difficult to encounter than the Hundred Family Banquet. Therefore, they were naturally filled with anticipation and immediately started a discussion on what Bu Fang would be cooking after sitting down.

With the gaze of everyone there focused on him, the emperor arrived in his dragon robe and a cloak made from the fur of a spirit beast draped over his shoulder. He elegantly sat down on the main seat and a smile appeared on his face as he observed the ongoing

festivity.

Ji Chengxue exhaled a cloud of white breath and then started giving an inspirational speech that raised the intensity of the exuberant atmosphere even further.

Once his speech was over, Ji Chengxue announced the start of the Hundred Family Banquet.

...

Chef Jin pulled out a kitchen knife with an edge gleaming with sharpness. He specially requested the most famous blacksmith in the imperial city to forge this knife. The knife was heavy and capable of slicing through metal like it was mud. After using this kitchen knife for so many years, he was able to use the knife effortlessly.

For this year's Hundred Family Banquet, the dish he was going to make was none other than the Four Happiness Meatballs. He prepared many types of first-rate meat from spirit beasts. There was meat from both bovine spirit beasts as well as porcine spirit beasts from first grade all the way to third grade. The texture of bovine meat was soft and its marbling was extremely distinct. On the other hand, porcine meat was fat but not greasy and was abundant with spirit energy. He was going to make the Four Happiness Meatballs by mixing these two types of meat together. Chef Jin was confident that he could conquer everyone with this dish.

The ingredients he used were all top-notch. How could those garbage ingredients that Bu Fang prepared even compare with his? True delicious flavors would naturally require the use of excellent ingredients. How could dishes made from garbage ingredients be delicious?!

Therefore, Chef Jin viewed Bu Fang's actions with contempt. He originally thought Owner Bu might be an opponent that would be difficult to deal with. Now it seemed... he was just someone with

an undeserved reputation.

The ingredients prepared by the chefs were all rather high quality. There was even the meat of a fourth grade spirit beast, the Antler Sheep. It was obvious that everyone was planning to use these high quality ingredients to boost their own fame.

Cries of astonishment immediately came from the spectators below.

At that moment, several hundred chefs immediately started processing their ingredients. Every one of them demonstrated their cutting techniques to their heart's content. Some of the more skillful chefs were simply eye-dazzling as they started performing their cutting techniques. The scene of the chefs brandishing their kitchen knives as the blades reflected the glare of the sunlight was extremely astounding.

The commoners, who had never seen such a spectacular scene before, immediately let out cries of astonishment.

In that instant, the distinct sound of kitchen knives colliding with cutting boards resounded within the entire Gate of Heavenly Mystery.

...

Bu Fang took out the ingredients prepared by the imperial palace one after another. They were all ordinary ingredients that could be commonly seen in the homes of commoners.

These ingredients were really pitiful looking compared to the high grade ingredients prepared by the other chefs.

However, Bu Fang remained expressionless as he took out all of the ingredients. After cracking his neck, he was ready to start processing the ingredients.

The mark on his wrist flashed for a moment before a wisp of green smoke encircled his hand and a kitchen knife as black as ink appeared.

The more Bu Fang used the Golden Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife, the more proficient he became at using it. It felt as if the knife had fused together with his own arm and was becoming extremely easy to use.

Holding the kitchen knife in his right hand, he gently flicked the blade with his finger. Bu Fang's mouth slightly widened into a smile as he felt the slight vibration coming from the knife.

With true energy gathered in his hand, Bu Fang suddenly slapped the top of the table with his palm and the meat placed on the table all bounced into the air.

Chapter 150: The Flamboyant Bu Fang and the Rainbow-Colored Crescent Moon Dumplings

The corners of Chef Jin's lips slightly curled up as he listened to the cries of astonishment coming from the crowd with a face filled with satisfaction. He could feel that the gaze of the spectators were all gathered on him and he was the center of attention.

He was confident that his cutting technique was the best among all of the imperial chefs. Perhaps his skill at handling the ingredients might not be as good as those old masters who had been immersing themselves in the culinary arts for dozens of years, his cutting technique was definitely number one within the imperial kitchen.

After using a showy cutting technique to slice up a plate of beef, he looked up and found that the cries of astonishment became even more frequent. However... those cries were not directed at him.

His face slightly stiffened for a moment before a frown appeared on his face. His bald head seemed to be about to radiate light under the sun.

He turned his head toward the crowd and discovered the spectators were all looking at another cooking stove nearby. That was exactly where the chef he disliked, Bu Fang, was cooking.

The expression on his face became even worse and his mood turned sour. There was no way his mood would be good when someone he disliked stole his spotlight.

Therefore, he wanted to have a good look and see how this Owner Bu was able to steal his spotlight. After all... He had the advantage with his head sparkling under the sunlight!

As Bu Fang slapped the table with his palm, only the meat

bounced into the air. The Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife was twirled around in his hand and then swung toward the meat in the air. The meat was only ordinary pork and not the meat of spirit beasts. Therefore, slicing through them with the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife that could cut through metal like mud was effortlessly accomplished.

As the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife continued to rotate and slice through the pieces of meat, the large pieces of pork hovered in the air and gradually became smaller in the eyes of the spectators.

Bu Fang held out a white porcelain plate and the slices of meat fell neatly onto the plate as if they were strictly arranged.

However, with the relaxed expression shown on Bu Fang's face, this was evidently only a very simple feat for him.

After the pork was sliced by Bu Fang, the slices were as thin as the wings of a cicada and even the veined patterns on its surface could be clearly seen.

Next, Bu Fang brought over the fruits and vegetables while twirling the knife in his hand and then diced all of them. This time, his method of dicing them was even stranger. He basically did not differentiate between them and directly threw all of them into the air.

The Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife swept past like a gust of wind and a dark stream of light seemed to have flashed past. Those fruits and vegetables were all diced apart and fell into a pile on one side.

As Bu Fang scooped up Kuruma Prawns from the cold water, he twirled the kitchen knife in his hand and the outer shells of these prawns would be immediately removed with only the meat left. This series of movements were so quick that the onlookers were almost unable to follow them. His method of handling the ingredients completely astonished the spectators.

A large basin of prawns were completely peeled within seven and a half minutes. Afterward, Bu Fang minced these prawns and mixed them together with other minced meat as well as the diced fruits and vegetables.

The colorful ingredients were strikingly bright and eye-catching. As Bu Fang stirred the mixture, he added some sauce and seasoning from time to time. Even though he had not started cooking yet, a faint fragrance was already wafting out from the mixture.

A distance away, quite a number of people were observing and watching Owner Bu's actions. This was the first time that they were seeing Owner Bu's appearance while he was cooking. They did not anticipate that his movements would be so graceful and swift.

"What's Owner Bu making? He's mincing and mixing so many ingredients together... Is he making the fillings for Golden Shumai? That's not right... Those are not the ingredients for the Golden Shumai," Xiao Xiaolong and the others puzzledly muttered. They were completely unable to guess the dish Bu Fang was making.

Not only Xiao Xiaolong and the others, but even many of the the chefs there could not understand. If he was making the fillings, what was the purpose of those pork slices that were thinner than the wings of a cicada?

Everyone was somewhat perplexed but the crowds of spectators were all cheering. Bu Fang's elegant manner of handling the ingredients had completely amazed them.

So, chefs could be this good-looking when they were serious!

After the fillings were properly seasoned, Bu Fang washed his hands with clear water and wiped the water droplets on his slender and fair hands with a clean cloth. Then, he took out a large bag of flour of the highest quality within the imperial city, which he requested from the young eunuch.

Even though its quality was still not as good as the flour provided by the system, Bu Fang was still rather satisfied after taking a pinch of the flour and sniffing it.

As the true energy vortex started rotating within his dantian, true energy gathered on his palm and Bu Fang's expression suddenly became stern. He poured the flour into a large basin and then added warm water before stirring the mixture. With the aid of true energy, the consistency of the flour rapidly started getting thicker.

Bang!

Once the dough was kneaded until its texture was somewhat smooth, Bu Fang tossed it into the air. While the large lump of dough was in mid-air, he promptly struck the dough with his palm and caused a loud slapping sound.

The dough shook for a moment and then rose upward once more. When it plunged downward again, Bu Fang threw out another palm strike filled with true energy.

Just like that, a lump of dough was continuously juggled like a ball by Bu Fang. It fell, rose into the air, fell once again...

Xiao Meng was sitting nearby at a banquet table and his eyes suddenly narrowed. With his cultivation level, he could naturally see through Bu Fang's technique. Every single palm strike Bu Fang was throwing was not simple at all. Whenever his palm struck the dough, a wave of vibration instantly passed through it and caused the entire lump of dough to become anew.

In simpler terms, Bu Fang was causing the lump of dough to flip inside out each time he struck it with his palm...

This was a very high level true energy technique that required the user to have an extremely precise control over one's true energy. Even Xiao Meng himself would only be able to perform such a feat after undergoing a lot of training.

Bu Fang's performance triggered cries of astonishment from the crowd once more. It was simply too showy and flamboyant!

Ouyang Xiaoyi burst into laughter. "I didn't know the smelly boss who's usually a cold person on the surface would actually be so flamboyant while cooking! Kekeke!"

Xiao Yanyu was also laughing while covering her mouth with her hand. When she recalled Bu Fang's face that was usually stern and compared that with his flamboyant appearance as he struck the dough palm after palm, she was suddenly unable to hold back her smile any longer.

Now that the dough was kneaded... Bu Fang's dish seemed to be ready. Was he making buns? Or was this a new type of Golden Shumai?

Many people were puzzled and continued with their guesses. There were many types of dishes that required dough. However, the exact dish was debatable because no one could tell from the fillings that Bu Fang prepared.

Once he was finished kneading, the entire lump of dough was giving off heat. This was induced by Bu Fang's true energy. Every time he flipped the dough inside out, the intense friction was enough to heat the dough to a scalding hot temperature.

As the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife rotated, the large lump of dough was rapidly cut into smaller lumps. Then, Bu Fang placed these lumps of dough aside.

"Come over here and start a fire. Bring the water in the wok to a boil," Bu Fang said as he beckoned toward the dazed young eunuch standing nearby, who seemed to have been shocked by his flamboyance.

Only then did Bu Fang let out a sigh of relief and look around his surroundings.

The chefs around him were almost finished with their dishes and

were starting the finishing stage. The rich aroma of the dishes were rising into the air and lingering above the Gate of Heavenly Mystery. The air above the plaza seemed to become hazy as if the aroma was forming a cloud.

Such a scene was a rare sight to behold. With so many chefs cooking at the same time, the scale was simply too large.

Bu Fang looked away and paid no more attention to the completion state of the dishes belonging to the chefs around him. His slender fingers nimbly moved around a little and then he picked up a slice of pork that was as thin as the wings of a cicada. He stuffed the pork slice with the fillings mixed earlier and squeezed it into a ball. Grabbing a small lump of dough, he flattened the dough into a thin wrapper before wrapping the ball with it.

Once the wrapping was completed, layers upon layers of creases appeared at the opening and the dumpling looked like a crescent moon. It was so beautiful that it was like a work of art.

The Crescent Moon Dumpling was the most classic method of wrapping a dumpling.

However, this was not just any dumpling but a revised version made according to the latest system reward, the Rainbow-Colored Water Dumpling, that was given by the system. This was a version that was suitable for consumption by the general public.

Chapter 151: Rainbow-Colored Crescent Moon Dumpling? Where's the Rainbow Colors?

Within the bustling Gate of Heavenly Mystery, a man whose head was sparkling under the sunlight was extremely eye-catching as he stood behind one of many cooking stoves.

Chef Jin's expression was solemn as he skillfully kneaded a meatball with his hands. This meatball was made using different kinds of meat mixed together and its taste was definitely extraordinary. This was a dish that he was extremely proud of. For the sake of this year's Hundred Family Banquet, he was giving his all.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Suddenly, Chef Jin stopped in the middle of kneading a meatball after getting startled by a deafening noise and discovering his cooking stove was slightly shaking.

He subconsciously looked toward the direction where the sound was coming from and saw a fat person was actually fiercely hammering at a piece of meat on a cooking stove with a sledgehammer in his hands.

"Is this his idea of cooking? Is there something wrong with this fatso's head?" Chef Jin sarcastically asked as the corners of his lips twitched. No one else ever cooked as if they were having a fight like this fatso.

Rip!

A bone-chilling sound rang out and goosebumps rose all over Chef Jin's body. His eyes widened as he looked behind that fatso.

There, a short and thin person with a large black wok on his back was cutting open a struggling spirit beast on the ground with the

dagger in his hand...

Chef Jin swallowed his saliva with a gulp. His pupils constricted as he felt a sudden chill in his heart. The madness in that person's eyes made him feel as if he was looking at a vicious executioner instead of a chef.

"Who are all these people... This year's Hundred Family Banquet is simply too disorganized. They didn't even manage to filter these sort of people from the participants. This is simply nonsense."

Chef Jin muttered with a chilly expression on his face before he focused all of his attention back on making his dish once more.

...

Clouds of steam were rising from the wok and the water inside was already close to the boiling point.

At that moment, Bu Fang had already kneaded over a dozen Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings. This time, he did not follow the recipe provided by the system but used his own revised version instead. He only used ordinary ingredients for the fillings so that anyone would be able to eat the dish without experiencing any discomfort from consuming spirit energy.

Many of the chefs around him had already finished cooking and their dishes were already served to the emperor as well as some of the high-ranking officials.

As the ruling power of the empire, they were naturally the first to taste the dishes.

These people were nodding their heads as they ate the food. After all, these were the dishes of famous chefs. It was natural for them to taste good.

After tasting the dish in front of him, Ji Chengxue indifferently nodded and ordered someone to take it away without any change in his expression.

As each dish was taken away, the next dish would be brought forward.

Meanwhile, the commoners finally managed to have a taste of these delicious dishes as well. They were already close to their limits after having their appetites aroused by the fragrance wafting in the air. Many of their stomachs were rumbling in protest.

Chef Jin's dish was successfully completed as well. After pouring his meticulously prepared sauce over the meatballs, the piping hot and intensely fragrant Four Happiness Meatballs were ready to be eaten.

After seeing the rather appetizing Four Happiness Meatballs, Ji Chengxue raised his eyebrows and indiscernibly nodded. He picked up one of the meatballs and gently took a bite.

The moment his teeth broke through the surface of the meatball, a thick juice gushed out from the center and instantly flowed into his mouth. The aroma was so fragrant that Ji Chengxue could not help but continue sucking the juice from the meatball. The juice contained not just the flavor of a single type of meat but tasted of several different kinds of meat combined together. After undergoing a special preparation by the bald-headed Chef Jin, there was actually no sense of conflict in the flavors and the taste was surprisingly good.

After finishing the meatball, Ji Chengxue nodded in satisfaction. After tasting so many dishes up until now, this was the only dish that he thought was interesting.

"As expected of a head chef from the imperial kitchen, it's not bad," Ji Chengxue praised with a smile.

When Chef Jin who was still cooking in front of his stove saw the smile on the emperor's face, he was suddenly overjoyed. He felt better than ever and was filled with confidence as if a seed had instantly grown into a plant and bore fruit upon his head.

Meanwhile, the imperial city's bigwigs and the commoners were full of praise as well as they ate the Four Happiness Meatballs. Evidently, this dish had conquered their stomachs.

"I am still a head chef from the imperial kitchen after all!" Chef Jin's bald head became even brighter as he resisted the urge to hum a tune. He thought, "Owner Bu? The brothers from Qingyangzhen? They're nothing!"

As Bu Fang's slender hands rapidly kneaded the Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings, the amount of crescent moon dumplings in front of him grew more and more.

When the water in the wok had completely reached boiling point and the heat was enough to make him slightly narrow his eyes, Bu Fang started dropping the dumplings into the boiling water.

Plop, plop.

One after another, the Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings were dropped into the bubbling water. They floated on the surface for a while before sinking to the bottom of the wok.

Bu Fang gave the water dumplings in the wok a glance before he went back and started kneading dumplings again. He prepared quite an amount of fillings which should be enough for a few hundred dumplings. Bu Fang's kneading speed was extremely fast and he could knead a crescent moon dumpling within a few breaths.

"Keep feeding the fire, don't let it get smaller," Bu Fang reminded the young eunuch stoking the fire.

The young eunuch hurriedly nodded and added a few more pieces of wood into the fire.

The dumplings soon started rising toward the surface of the water. Bu Fang's eyes were sharp and his hands were quick. The instant a dumpling reached the surface, he scooped it up and dropped it into a blue and white porcelain bowl.

A single bowl was only large enough to contain three of the Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings.

The white and glossy Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings was not radiating rainbow colors despite its name. These dumplings were smooth and translucent, and the fillings inside could almost be seen.

From the outside, there seemed to be a faint amount of fragrance enveloping the fillings and made the dumpling appear extremely tantalizing.

After pouring a ladle of the soup into the bowl and then sprinkling some chopped up green onion, the Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings was completed.

The young eunuch approached Bu Fang and was slightly surprised as he looked at the exquisite crescent moon dumplings. The aroma of the dumplings were not as fragrant compared to the dishes of the other chefs.

However, the young eunuch did not say anything either as he picked up the dish and walked in Ji Chengxue's direction.

"This is Owner Bu's... dish?"

Ji Chengxue was filled with anticipation as he looked at the dish being presented by the young eunuch. However, when he saw the ordinary-looking crescent moon dumplings whose fragrance was not that strong either, the expectation in his heart rapidly declined and he became somewhat disappointed.

There were no dumplings in the Light Wind Empire, so Ji Chengxue did not recognize the dish. However, Ji Chengxue had tasted Bu Fang's Golden Shumai before and its rich fragrance and glistening appearance were still lingering in his memory even till now. In contrast, the adorable-looking water dumplings in the blue and white porcelain bowl in front of him were not as fragrant as he expected. Ji Chengxue let out a sigh.

"What did Owner Bu call this dish?" Even though he was somewhat disappointed, Ji Chengxue still asked the young eunuch.

"Owner Bu said this dish is called Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings," the young eunuch respectfully said.

"Hmm? Rainbow-colored? How is this rainbow-colored? Aren't these crescent moon dumplings entirely white in color?" Ji Chengxue was bewildered. He was somewhat confused as he gave the white dumplings another glance. Rainbow-colored was naturally seven colors. Why was the dish called rainbow-colored when there was only a single color?

Was there something else special about this dish? Ji Chengxue's eyes suddenly lit up. He suddenly remembered that with Bu Fang's capability in cooking, it was impossible for him to bring out such an ordinary dish...

The expectation in his heart, which had already fallen before, rose up once more. Ji Chengxue was now eager to have a taste of these Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings.

Using a soup spoon to scoop up a steaming crescent moon dumpling, Ji Chengxue blew on the dumpling before gently taking a bite.

After biting through the tender skin of the dumpling with a single bite, Ji Chengxue's eyes instantly widened and became filled with incredulity.

A rich aromatic explosion suddenly occurred in Ji Chengxue's mouth and the surging waves of flavor made him feel a sense of satisfaction.

As a rich fragrance wafted out from the bite he took from the dumpling, Ji Chengxue's nostrils widened when he saw the fragrance...

What the hell, this fragrance actually caused a rainbow!

Chapter 152: What a Dish That Delights People

A stream of fragrance gushed out from the bite in the dumpling toward his face and Ji Chengxue slightly narrowed his eyes. The rich fragrance burrowed into his nostrils within an instant and provoked his senses.

The rainbow-like fragrance appeared quickly and dissipated quickly as well, like a flash in the pan. When Ji Chengxue recovered from his surprise, the rainbow-colored fragrance had already gradually disappeared.

As Ji Chengxue gently chewed the morsel in his mouth, he was suddenly filled with a sense of happiness and a faint smile subconsciously appeared on his lips. His chest was filled with uncontrollable joy.

This dumpling was actually affecting his mood. After eating the dumpling, his chest was filled with numerous and diverse emotions like the colors of a rainbow and then finally stopped at joy.

Ji Chengxue was not surprised that the dumpling did not contain even the slightest spirit energy since Bu Fang only used ordinary ingredients. However... the texture of the dumpling's skin greatly astonished him.

The soft, tender, and flavorful skin of the dumpling felt extremely smooth in his mouth like a breeze brushing past...

Ji Chengxue was unable hold back any longer. He swallowed the remaining half of the dumpling in one bite and blissfully savored the taste.

After finishing a dumpling, Ji Chengxue lifted up the blue and white porcelain bowl. He blew into the bowl before drinking a mouthful of the soup with a slurping sound. The soup appeared

extremely clear but the taste was not bland. On the contrary, it was savory like seafood soup.

Drinking a mouthful of soup after eating a dumpling was giving him a warm and fuzzy feeling in this cold winter.

Meanwhile, Bu Fang was adding the wrapped crescent moon dumplings into the wok while swiftly scooping up the dumplings floating on the surface. Every blue and white porcelain bowl was given three dumplings with chopped up green onions sprinkled over them. It was simple and satisfying.

The eunuchs served the Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings to the imperial court's high ranking officials and allowed them to have a taste as well.

As each of them took a bite of the crescent moon dumplings, they were astonished by the rainbow-colored fragrance and mystified by the stream of fragrance that gushed into their faces. It was simply... too beautiful.

Furthermore, the taste of the dumplings was beyond their expectations. It was so delicious that they almost swallowed their own tongues. Blissful and joyous expressions appeared on every one of their faces.

It was a dish that delighted people.

Finally, it was the turn of the commoners. They were already feeling somewhat impatient. When they saw the blissful expressions on the faces of the high ranking officials, they were already close to their limits. Just what sort of dish could make them feel so happy?

All of the commoners that received their Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings were eager to have a taste of the dish. As they took a bite of the dumplings, the rainbow-colored fragrance gushed out and enveloped them.

The rich fragrance pervaded the air and filled the entire place.

Everyone could not help but fiercely sniff the air. The craving in their hearts were teased to the point of being uncontrollable.

As an old couple took a bite of their dumplings, joyous expressions appeared on their faces and they felt as if they had suddenly become much younger.

"Old woman, have a taste of this. This dish... is really delicious." The old man scooped up a crescent moon dumpling with his spoon and held it in front of the old granny next to him with a face full of smiles.

The old granny immediately laughed in embarrassment and rolled her eyes at the old man but still took a bite at the dumpling. A warm feeling was spreading in their chests.

As the two elderly people with graying hair ate their dumplings, a feeling of happiness was being spread around them.

A young man was eating a crescent moon dumpling while his wife sat next to him. The two of them were at odds with each other due to a trivial matter and were currently at the stage of ignoring each other.

The wife's serving of crescent moon dumplings was still not served yet, so she was looking at her husband who was heartily eating his dumplings from the corner of her eye and getting angrier by the minute.

Suddenly, she was slightly startled when a white porcelain spoon with a steaming dumpling on top was thrust in front of her.

She turned her head and found her husband looking at her with a gentle expression on his face.

"Hehe, dear, have a bite as well. It's really delicious... There seems to be something magical about this dish!" the husband said with a soft laugh as he brought the dumpling to his wife's lips.

The wife was feeling exasperated a moment ago but her resentment disappeared in that instant. Her pretty face flushed

with redness as she shyly took a bite at the dumpling. A rainbow-colored fragrance gushed out and caused her face to be filled with euphoria.

The wife ate half the dumpling and then her husband ate the rest of the dumpling in a single bite. The redness on her face immediately became brighter. She pinched her husband's arm and bashfully said, "What're you doing, there's so many people here! How embarrassing!"

Similar scenes continued to occur in the Gate of Heavenly Mystery. Every single person that tasted the Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings would be filled with happiness. Furthermore, young couples who were previously quarrelling would be reconciled with each other.

The charm of the dumplings made everyone exude joyful emotions and increased the festive mood even more.

"Why is it not our turn yet?! It's too slow!"

Some of the more impatient commoners even left their seats and started heading in Bu Fang's direction.

With someone taking the lead, more and more people followed suit and left their seats. The order of the scene became somewhat chaotic all of a sudden.

Bu Fang knitted his eyebrows together as he expressionlessly watched the crowd of people charging toward him.

Meanwhile, above the high platform, Ji Chengxue had already eaten the three dumplings in his bowl and even the soup was drank without leaving a single drop. He felt extremely satisfied as he put down the bowl and let out a breath of hot air.

"Stop them, let them return to their seats and obediently wait. Otherwise, all of their qualifications will be cancelled and they'll be driven out," Ji Chengxue mildly said to the eunuch standing nearby as he gave the somewhat disorderly scene below a glance.

The eunuch relayed the command and numerous guards in armor immediately appeared to restore the order.

These commoners did not dare to disobey the emperor's will. They could only sit down on their seats and endure their cravings as they waited in anticipation for Bu Fang's dumplings.

Chef Jin's complexion became deathly pale and his bald head seemed to appear extremely dim under the sunlight...

"How is this happening? Why is this happening? How could he make such a delicious dish with only ordinary ingredients?" Chef Jin was beside oneself. The reaction of the crowd and Ji Chengxue's satisfied expression had no doubt told him that Bu Fang's Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings had completely trounced his Four Happiness Meatballs.

This was practically a bolt from the blue for Chef Jin, who had always been a proud person. He boasted in front of the other chefs that Owner Bu was only a cook that got lucky and there was no need to be wary of him. However, the result had just mercilessly slapped him in the face. He was slapped so badly that even his bald head became extremely dim.

"I... don't believe this!" Chef Jin suddenly became somewhat agitated. He actually let go of the meatball in his hands and intended to walk toward Bu Fang.

"Chef Jin... Please complete your dish, you're not allowed to walk around without permission." The eunuch said in a high-pitched voice as he hurriedly stopped Chef Jin from leaving and caused the latter to become clear-headed.

Chef Jin took in a deep breath and meaningfully gave Bu Fang, who was methodically kneading his dumplings, a glance before letting out a snort.

Sizzle.

The sizzling sound of oil dripping into an open fire travelled into

Chef Jin's ears and slightly startled him. He turned and looked toward a particular spot somewhere nearby.

His pupils constricted once more as he sucked in a breath of cold air.

The two brothers, Ah Lu and Ah Wei, were finished with their dishes as well... However, the visual effect was simply too shocking.

On top of Ah Lu's cooking stove, a gigantic metal rod was vertically standing there instead of a wok. The metal rod was piercing through a gigantic piece of aromatic roasted meat.

Glistening droplets of oil was continuously seeping through the surface of the meat and produced sizzling sounds as they dripped into the fire underneath the cooking stove.

Next to Ah Lu, Ah Wei had also finished his dish as well... His dish was also roast meat but he used a different cooking method from his brother.

Ah Wei was holding onto multiple skewers in each hand and each of the skewers was piercing through a small spirit beast covered in glistening oil.

Chapter 153: The Barbecued Boar That Wants to Ascend into Heaven

The fat all over Ah Lu's body was violently shaking as he rapidly swung the huge kitchen knife in his hand with a serious look in his tiny eyes and carved meat off the gigantic piece of roast meat.

Slice after slice of meat was carved from the gigantic piece of roast meat and they fell onto the white plates on the table. Each plate contained a single slice of roast meat. When five plates were filled, Ah Lu would put down the kitchen knife and use a ladle to pour some sauce over the pieces of roast meat.

The rich fragrance of the meat accompanied with the sweet and sour aroma sauce immediately rose into the air and overwhelmed the senses of the people nearby.

Then, Ah Lu signalled to the eunuch that the dish was ready to be served.

Ji Chengxue's eyes slightly brightened when he saw the piece of tender and juicy roast meat in front of him. The piece of meat was well roasted and the marbling on its surface was very distinct. From a single glance, he knew this was not just any spirit beast meat.

"Is this meat from the third grade spirit beast, Plum Blossoms Spotted Boar?" Ji Chengxue muttered to himself as something suddenly came to mind.

Ji Chengxue accepted a dagger made from gold that a eunuch attentively handed over. He pressed down on the roast meat with his chopsticks and then used the dagger to slice off a small piece of the meat. It was still quite easy for a sharp dagger to cut through meat that was already cooked.

The moment the meat was cut open, a puff of steam along with a rich fragrance suddenly gushed out from the opening. The

fragrance was silky smooth, like milk.

Using his chopsticks, Ji Chengxue picked up the small piece of meat that he cut off and dipped it in the sauce before popping it into his mouth.

As he chewed the morsel in his mouth, the expression on his face became dreamy. His eyes were slightly narrowed and he seemed to be enjoying the wondrous feeling of the meaty flavor bursting in his mouth. His entire being seemed to be getting cleansed by the cloud of aroma.

Immersed within the feeling, he almost did not want to wake up.

After a long while, Ji Chengxue slowly opened his eyes and praised out loud with an enraptured expression.

Afterward, he continued eating the dish and started cutting up the meat into smaller pieces. The sweetness and sourness of the sauce was making it difficult for Ji Chengxue to stop eating.

When Ah Lu saw the enraptured expression on Ji Chengxue's face, he broke into a laugh and the fat on his face violently jiggled. He was just about to celebrate by pulling out a chicken drumstick from his apron but stopped after thinking for a moment. He was once reprimanded by his master for eating chicken drumsticks while cooking.

Plates after plates of roast meat were served to the guests and they all wallowed in its rich aroma and marvelous taste.

Suddenly, Ah Lu sniffed the air and the fat on his face started jiggling once more. He turned and looked in the direction of his brother's cooking stove. There, a fragrance that seemed to possess magical powers was drifting out.

"What a fragrant smell! I really want to eat that! Big bro's culinary skill has really improved again!" Ah Lu was almost drooling as he sniffed the aroma wafting in the air.

Ah Wei's culinary skill was good without any doubt. Ah Lu had

always held great confidence in his elder brother, especially after getting agitated by Owner Bu.

Gulp! As he sniffed the aroma, the struggle on Ah Lu's face became even more intense. "I can't eat the roast meat... I really want to have a chicken drumstick right now!"

Meanwhile, Bu Fang was expressionlessly kneading his dumplings when he was slightly startled by an aroma wafting in the air. He sniffed the air and slightly raised his eyebrows.

"Someone's actually smoking meat with spirit herbs..." Bu Fang subconsciously muttered as his movements of kneading the dumplings slowed down a little. There was spirit energy within spirit herbs, and it was capable of improving the luster and taste of an ingredient.

Even though directly burning spirit herbs was a wasteful method, it was an extremely exquisite technique to smoke meat.

Bu Fang's expression slightly changed. He had to admit that the smell of the barbecued meat was really delicious. The result produced when the smell of the meaty aroma and medicinal fragrance were mixed together was unexpectedly good.

As the fragrance spread everywhere, the expression of everyone who smelled the aroma changed. They turned toward the source of the smell with captivated and intoxicated expressions. They were continuously swallowing their own salivas as rumbling noises came from their stomachs.

Ji Chengxue had just finished Ah Lu's roast meat and was still in a daze when his attention was attracted by this peculiar fragrance. He could not help but crane his neck toward Ah Wei's present location.

Ah Wei was holding five skewers on one hand and barbecuing spirit beasts covered in glistening oil with them. These spirit beasts appeared very adorable after getting processed.

Once the finishing touches were completed, Ah Wei handed the five skewers over to a eunuch.

"The emperor gets one skewer while others get one per table," Ah Wei said as he lifted up his sharp chin.

The eunuch hurriedly nodded after recovering from his surprise and carefully carried the skewers over to Ji Chengxue.

After leaving a small and delicate skewered boar at Ji Chengxue's table, he divided the remaining four skewers among the empire's high ranking officials.

Everyone was looking at the spirit beast on the skewers. Even though a rich fragrance was continuously emanating from the skewers and the aroma was continuously enticing them... no one, including Ji Chengxue, attempted to start eating.

The main reason was Ah Wei's barbecued meat was simply too lifelike like they were covered with a layer of red and tender skin. Every single spirit beast appeared extremely cute. They were so cute that no one dared to start eating.

"Start eating, what are you people looking at? Food is meant to be eaten, don't tell me you're just going to look?" Ah Wei tauntingly said with a sneer when he saw no one was actually eating.

After he was done taunting them, he went back to his cooking stove and continued barbecuing the spirit beasts...

Ji Chengxue narrowed his eyes before grabbing a dagger and directly cutting open the barbecued boar that looked as if it wanted to ascend into heaven with its legs spread wide open.

The skin of the barbecued boar was very crispy and tender. As his dagger sliced into the boar with a crunching sound, it was like cutting through paper.

The stomach of the barbecued boar was actually stuffed with ingredients as well. When the boar was cut open, the steaming sauce-like ingredients spilled out and covered the entire barbecued

boar.

"A dish within a dish?!" Ji Chengxue exclaimed in surprise. The mellow aroma of the sauce was making him even more eager to start eating.

The somewhat tangerine sauce was different from the sauce used in Ah Lu's dish. It seemed to be cooked using stock before simmering with spirit herbs and then poured into the stomach of the barbecued boar. Once it was cut open, the sauce would automatically spill out.

Ah Lu's sauce was a condiment while Ah Wei's sauce itself could be considered a dish.

Ji Chengxue used a porcelain spoon to scoop up the sauce before cutting off a slice of the barbecued pork and then shoved them together into his mouth.

The moment the spoon entered Ji Chengxue's mouth, the hair all over his body stood up and there was even steam slightly gushing out from his nostrils.

The barbecued pork was extremely smooth and tender in his mouth. There was not even the usual chewiness of barbecued meat in the slightest. However, when matched with the mellow sauce that was just like countless ingredients mixed together, it instantly caused Ji Chengxue to be captivated and intoxicated.

Slicing the barbecued pork, scooping up the sauce, shoving them into his mouth, getting intoxicated... Ji Chengxue consecutively repeated these actions multiple times and half of the barbecued boar was eaten by him in a single breath. The sauce was also drank to the last drop.

"Delicious! It's truly delicious!" Ji Chengxue praised with a bright smile while repeatedly nodding.

Hearing this, the corners of Ah Wei's lips curled up. With his eyebrows raised and chin tilted up, he turned his head and looked

in Bu Fang's direction as if he was trying to provoke him.

However, Bu Fang was fully concentrated on kneading his dumplings and did not look up from start till finish.

Ah Wei's provocation resulted in failure in the end and it made him somewhat inexplicably furious. He put in so much effort to cook this dish just to avenge his humiliation and let Bu Fang know about his capability. However, it seemed... Bu Fang never saw him as an opponent in the first place!

"Hmph! Owner Bu, you shall soon experience the taste of defeat!" Ah Wei said with a snort.

As the chefs gradually completed their dishes, plates after plates of dishes were placed on the banquet tables and even the commoners had almost eaten all of the dishes. Although, everyone's progress rate might have been different.

Nevertheless, there were bright smiles on everyone's faces.

There were times when food had such magical powers that could make people feel happy and experience an indescribable joy.

Chapter 154: You Can't Accept the Result? Then Try a Serving Yourself

The Hundred Family Banquet was an activity held by the empire for the sake of celebrating the Spring Festival and the banquet itself was a festive event.

Within the Gate of Heavenly Mystery, the scene of clouds of fragrance in the air and the sound of laughter resounding incessantly in the background was very harmonious. The aroma of the food interweaved with the laughter of the guests formed an unforgettable picture.

The guests were heartily enjoying their meals and the chefs were diligently cooking the food. Within this cold winter day, the atmosphere created a different kind of warmth.

However... when the warm mood was over, it was time for a cruel competition where the guests had to select the number one chef for this year's Hundred Family Banquet.

For the guests, it was blissful and joyful while they were eating. However, picking someone... was painful because there were simply too many delicious dishes in this year's Hundred Family Banquet. Whether the Four Happiness Meatballs, the roasted spirit beast, the barbecued spirit beast that was a dish within a dish, or the Rainbow-Colored Crescent Moon Dumplings... These were all dishes that they had never heard before.

Many of them were troubled with making a choice but they had no other option. Each of them were given the right to cast a single vote and not using it would be a waste. Otherwise, attending this year's Hundred Family Banquet would be in vain.

After Bu Fang was done kneading the dumplings, he gently breathed out and wiped off the moisture on his hands as well as the droplets of sweat on his forehead. After kneading a few hundred

dumplings in one go, even he was feeling exhausted.

The other chefs were also finished as well and some of them were leisurely leaning on their cooking stoves. Even though there was still quite a bit of ingredients left, it was already time for the voting so everyone stopped cooking. This also meant that the Hundred Family Banquet was nearly over.

Chef Jin's eyes looked rather fierce as he felt somewhat helpless. The chefs participating this year were simply too frightening. Whether it was Owner Bu or the brothers from Qingyangzhen, there was a great possibility for them to endanger his position and it was making him feel nervous.

Ji Chengxue stood up and slowly walked forward with a cloak made from the fur of a spirit beast draped over his shoulders. He surveyed the entire place from the platform he was standing on.

"In this year's Hundred Family Banquet, I wonder if everyone had an enjoyable and satisfying meal?" Ji Chengxue's calm voice resounded within the Gate of Heavenly Mystery.

As Bu Fang listened to Ji Chengxue's lengthy speech, he dropped some dumplings into the boiling water. After cooking for such a long while, he himself was craving the dumplings as well.

Bu Fang scooped up the translucent and adorably plump dumplings from the water. As he took a bite of one of the dumplings, a stream of rainbow-colored fragrance instantly gushed out. It enveloped his face and caused him to become somewhat intoxicated.

This rainbow-colored fragrance was produced only after performing a special preparation. The secret was inside the dough. When Bu Fang meticulously kneaded the dough with true energy, the dough was infused with his true energy. As the dumplings were cooked in boiling water, the true energy sparked a chemical reaction and manifested the various colors of the fillings inside. In truth, the visual image of the fragrance was not real. In simple

terms, it was actually something like a mirage.

However, the fragrance itself was genuine.

After drinking a mouthful of the heartwarming soup, Bu Fang lightly breathed out and took another bite of the dumpling. The delicious flavor was wrapping around his taste buds and making him feel satisfied.

Sometimes, a bowl of dumplings was enough to make someone feel extremely satisfied.

When Bu Fang finished eating a bowl of dumplings, Ji Chengxue finally ended his lengthy speech as well. Like those high ranked officials and public figures, he needed to say a lot of insignificant matters before an event could start.

Bu Fang had already long gotten used to such things.

After Ji Chengxue was done with his speech, he went back to his seat and sat down. A eunuch stepped forward and started announcing the rules in a high-pitched voice. "Next, all of you're currently holding onto a special copper coin. This coin represents your vote. Among the dishes of the many chefs here today, which is your favorite? Once you've made your choice, place your copper coin into the porcelain plate in front of that chef's cooking stove. The chef with the most votes will obtain a reward prepared by the imperial court."

The commoners below immediately started whispering to each other while looking at the special copper coins in their hands.

When the eunuch announced the start of the voting, the commoners immediately left their seats and headed toward the chefs' cooking area.

"Chef Jin, the Four Happiness Meatballs were really too delicious! I am rooting for you!" a brawny man said as he excitedly placed a copper coin into the bald-headed Chef Jin's porcelain plate.

A smile immediately appeared on Chef Jin's face like a blossoming flower. The first person was already voting for him? Looks like the response for his Four Happiness Meatballs was pretty good.

Chef Jin rubbed his bald head and suddenly felt the world was beautiful again. He gave Bu Fang who was standing far away a provocative-like glance and then snorted at the fatty next to him who was continuously chomping on chicken drumsticks.

After getting the first vote, would the second vote be long?

"Fatty, your roast meat was very delicious! This elder sister is rooting for you!" This was someone who voted for Ah Lu.

"Chef with the large black wok, your barbecued spirit beast was practically making me unable to stop eating. It was simply too delicious! As expected of a chef! " This was someone who voted for Ah Wei.

"Owner Bu! You're so handsome! Your cutting technique was practically blinding my eyes! Your dumplings... made me want to cry! It's too delicious!"

"Owner Bu, I want to give birth to your child! I'll root for you forever!"

"Owner Bu, we really enjoyed your dish. We hope you'll continue cooking delicious dishes. We're rooting for you," an old couple encouragingly said with a faint smile as they walked over hand in hand and placed their copper coins into the porcelain plate in front of Bu Fang.

Bu Fang's expression straightened as he slightly bowed toward the old couple and softly said, "I'll do my best."

The situation became one-sided within an instant...

Chef Jin looked as if he had nothing to live for as he stared at the single copper coin sitting all alone in his porcelain plate. Where was the second coin that was agreed upon... What happened to the

peak of his life that was agreed upon?

His bald head gradually grew dimmer and almost lost all of its luster.

Ah Lu pulled out a chicken drumstick from the pocket on his apron and fiercely chewed on them with a satisfied expression on his face.

On the other hand, Ah Wei was looking at the porcelain plate in front of him with a gloomy expression. Obviously, compared with Bu Fang... his votes were far lesser.

Was he going to lose? How could that be possible... He already put in so much effort to make this dish! He even resorted to a technique like dish within a dish, so why was he still losing? Furthermore, he lost to someone who was not even using ingredients with spirit energy!

Ah Wei tightly clenched his fist and firmly bit his lips. He was unwilling to admit defeat just like that.

"Smelly boss! This dumpling is super delicious! Are you going to sell this in the store?" Ouyang Xiaoyi gleefully said as she energetically approached Bu Fang. She was definitely going to vote for Bu Fang.

Xiao Yanyu, Xiao Xiaolong, and the others also came over and placed their copper coins into the porcelain plate in front of Bu Fang. They gently smiled and nodded toward Bu Fang.

Other high ranking officials came over as well. Even though some people within the high ranking officials chose Ah Wei, there were even more people who chose Bu Fang's Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings.

From their point of view, Ah Wei's barbecue technique might have reached an extremely perfect level but there was no comparison with Owner Bu's dumplings in terms of emotional investment in the dish.

That sort of dish that could make people feel happy and let them experience bliss during winter was still lingering in their minds.

There was something magical about Owner Bu's dish! A sort of magic power that mesmerized them!

"I can't accept this result! How could I lose!" Ah Wei could not accept his defeat. His expression was extremely unsightly as he stared at the scant amount of coins in his porcelain plate. Of course, the scant amount of coins on his plate was already not bad when compared to other people's completely empty plates.

Even though his younger brother, Ah Lu, only had a few coins as well, Ah Lu was unconcerned about the result. He was having a good time delightfully pulling out chicken drumsticks and shoving them into his mouth.

"You can't accept the result?" Ji Chengxue indifferently gave Ah Wei a glance and asked, "This result is determined through voting, what are you unsatisfied about?"

Ah Wei was suddenly stumped for words. Indeed, Ji Chengxue's words were reasonable. The result was determined through the voting of all of the guests. What was his basis for not accepting the result?

However, he was still unable to accept the result... Why was the dish that he meticulously cooked inferior to Bu Fang's Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumpling which did not even use ingredients with spirit energy?

Chef Jin was standing there, looking as if he had nothing to live for. When he heard Ah Wei's questioning, he also straightened his back and slightly nodded.

The taste of ordinary ingredients was definitely incomparable to ingredients with spirit energy. This had always been common knowledge in the culinary world. However, Bu Fang broke this principle today.

Bu Fang rubbed his own stomach as he expressionlessly gave Ah Wei and that bald-headed Chef Jin a glance and lightly breathed out.

He said, "You can't accept the result? Then try a serving yourself."

Chapter 155: Owner Bu Has a Venomous Tongue

Bu Fang was speaking in a calm voice. He was not using a condescending tone of someone who had just obtained victory but an indifferent and matter-of-fact tone.

Ah Wei was stunned. He did not anticipate Bu Fang to actually give such a reply. However, he really was tempted by Bu Fang's offer. He understood well enough that since Bu Fang's Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings could acquire the fondness of so many of the guests, there was naturally something special about his dish.

"Alright, let me have a serving and I'll let you have a taste of my barbecued spirit beast as well!" Ah Wei solemnly said with a nod. This was the nature of his personality. He did not like to take advantage of anyone. Furthermore, he also wanted to see Bu Fang's reaction after tasting his dish.

Bu Fang nodded. With a wave of his hand, a stream of true energy breezed past and a few crescent moon dumplings splashed into the wok of boiling water.

Ah Wei walked back to his cooking stove and earnestly started barbecuing a spirit beast.

The other chefs there all looked at each other and then subconsciously looked toward Bu Fang and Ah Wei. Were the two of them really going to have a go at each other?

Ah Lu was chomping on a chicken drumstick with a face filled with curiosity as he watched Bu Fang and Ah Wei cook. He understood Ah Wei's barbecue meat very well. In his opinion, the taste of the barbecue meat was simply too delicious. Therefore, he found it rather incredible that Owner Bu's dumplings could defeat his elder brother's barbecue meat.

An amused smile appeared on Ji Chengxue's lips as he observed the crowd's mood. He stopped the eunuch who was going to interrupt them and said, "Let them finish their match."

The eunuch immediately bowed and stepped back behind Ji Chengxue.

The Wildlands was a mysterious place and even the imperial court had no influence there. By the fact that Qingyangzhen was located right outside the Wildlands and even relied upon it, there was naturally something unusual about this town. These two brothers who came from such a place possessed astonishing culinary skills. Without Owner Bu, they would indeed be number one in this year's Hundred Family Banquet. Unfortunately for them...

Owner Bu's culinary skills was simply too formidable.

A strong aroma was soon filling the air. The smell was coming from the lifelike barbecue meat in Ah Wei's hand. The barbecue meat of the small spirit beast was both tender and succulent.

This was the result of barbecuing meat with spirit herbs as fuel. Not only was the visual effect superb, but the taste was excellent as well.

In contrast, even though an aroma was also wafting from the Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings being boiled in the water, this aroma was neither strong nor weak and could only be called ordinary. Compared to Ah Wei's barbecue meat, the aroma was completely not on the same level.

Even though many of the chefs were extremely puzzled and some of their gazes were even filled with suspicion... none of them dared to jump to conclusions because the copper coins inside of the porcelain plate before Bu Fang's cooking stove was proof that there was definitely something special about this dish.

Bu Fang scooped up the dumplings from the boiling water and

poured them into a blue and white porcelain bowl. With chopped up green onion sprinkled on top of the three dumplings, the dish was completed.

Ah Wei's dish was completed as well. Oil was continuously dripping from the intensely aromatic meat of the barbecue spirit beast.

"Owner Bu, please have a taste of this." Ah Wei walked toward Bu Fang and handed the barbecue meat over.

As Bu Fang accepted the barbecue meat, a wave of fragrance immediately rushed toward his face. His body and mind were instantly engulfed and he felt as if he was wandering within an inescapable sea of fragrance. The smell... was really aromatic.

A green wisp of smoke encircled Bu Fang's hand and then the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife appeared. As he lightly sliced open the spirit beast's stomach, the piping hot sauce immediately enveloped the barbecue meat and the fragrance became even more aromatic.

If Bu Fang's Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings were simple and elegant white orchids, this barbecue meat would be a fiery rose. The two were completely different types of dishes.

Bu Fang cut off a slice of meat and picked it up with his chopsticks. He dipped the slice of meat in the sauce before popping it into his mouth. The texture of the crispy skin and succulent meat instantly overwhelmed his tastebuds and he could not help but nod as his eyes lit up.

Meanwhile, Ah Wei had picked up the bowl of dumplings. The dumplings that were like simple and elegant white orchids were not impressive at first glance. However, its whitish, adorable appearance made the dish slightly more appetizing.

"Big bro, let me have a taste as well," Ah Lu said in an indistinct voice as he greedily stared at the bowl of dumplings while chewing on a chicken drumstick.

Ah Wei immediately gave him a disdainful glance. "Didn't I tell you not to talk to me when you're eating something? Did you forget again? If you want to eat this, get your own spoon and scoop it up yourself!"

Ah Lu immediately gave a foolish laugh and quickly found a spoon. Like Ah Wei, he scooped up a dumpling and was going to shove it into his mouth.

Steam, accompanied with the faint aroma of flour and vegetables, was rising from the dumplings.

Ah Wei took a bite out of a dumpling and discovered a multi-colored fragrance drifting out that seemed to have turned into a rainbow. So... this was the true meaning behind Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings?

A comfortable, satisfied, and blissful feeling suddenly rose up in his chest. It was a sort of feeling that transcended the definition of delicious.

Ah Wei went silent and quietly finished the entire dumpling with an uncertain expression on his face. Just from eating the dumpling, he could tell that he was truly defeated. It was a one-sided loss for him.

The difference between him and Owner Bu was like an impassable chasm.

Next to him, the flesh on Ah Lu's face were almost scrunched together. His eyes were filled with tears and his lips were trembling as he sobbed uncontrollably.

"What happened to you?!" Ah Wei was startled by Ah Lu's reaction. He was only eating a dish, was there a need for him to be so dramatic?

"Big bro... I miss our mom and dad!" Ah Lu said in an indistinct voice with tears flowing down his cheeks as he shoved the remaining half of the dumpling into his mouth while sobbing

uncontrollably.

Ah Wei became silent for a moment and then let out a soft sigh. There was truly something... magical about Owner Bu's dish.

Bu Fang finished tasting the barbecue meat. This time, he actually ate three more pieces. Even he was slightly surprised by himself. Evidently, this dish... was pretty good.

However... once Bu Fang ate a dish, he would give an honest appraisal with his venomous tongue out of habit. This time was not an exception either.

"The taste of your barbecue meat... is pretty good, but the way you handled the spirit beast meat is still not good enough. The spirit energy contained in the meat was equivalent to third grade but all of the spirit energy dissipated after getting handled by you. Furthermore, you smoked the meat with spirit herbs but did not manage to adhere the essence of the spirit herbs onto the meat. You also included a lot of unnecessary things that affected the taste. This is the cause of the slight oddness in the meat's flavor. In addition, the sauce..."

Everyone was staring at Bu Fang, who suddenly seemed to have turned into a chatterbox, with their mouths wide open. This was completely different from the usual Owner Bu who was concise with his words.

Ah Wei listened to the appraisal with an ashen expression. However, he was extremely shocked deep inside because Bu Fang was listing out the actual flaws of his dish. He could have averted some of the flaws that Bu Fang listed but even he could not avert some of the other flaws.

However, Bu Fang was capable of giving such a precise evaluation after merely having a few bites. It was simply terrifying!

"As expected of the man who could defeat me!" Ah Wei thought as he lifted his chin.

After Bu Fang finished his appraisal, he regained his refined demeanor and started cleaning up the cooking stove. This year's Hundred Family Banquet was finally over and there was no doubt who the winner was.

Bu Fang was the winner since his porcelain plate had the highest amount of copper coins.

Here... There were no applauses and Bu Fang was not experiencing the so-called joy of winning. He appeared calm as he gave the crowd the glance as if getting first place was a matter of course for him.

"Congratulations to the host for completing abrupt mission 2: obtain first place in the Hundred Family Banquet, crush everyone else, and spread the glory of the God of Cooking. The mission reward will now be issued."

Bu Fang went into a daze as the system's solemn voice resounded in his mind.

At the same time, a eunuch was announcing the final winner of the Hundred Family Banquet as well as the reward for getting first place.

Chapter 156: The Prize, a Single Seed

"This is the prize for getting first place?" Bu Fang asked in bewilderment. He expressionlessly watched as Ji Chengxue solemnly placed a seed with the size of peanuts into his hand.

"Isn't this just a peanut?" Bu Fang thought as he endured the impulse to slap Ji Chengxue's handsome face with a shoehorn.

After working hard for most of the day, he did not anticipate only getting a peanut-like seed like this. He was at a loss for words.

Looking at the pitch-black seed, it seemed to be somewhat old and in a bad shape. Its surface was covered with unusual thin markings that resembled an enigmatic magic array... However, it was still ultimately just a seed!

"Owner Bu, this is an extremely important treasure from within the imperial palace. My father highly regarded this seed while he was still alive. Today, I shall gift this to you as a reward. I hope you'll cultivate this seed and help germinate it," Ji Chengxue said with a smile.

Bu Fang glanced at the seed in his hand and then looked at the smile on Ji Chengxue's face. He kept getting the feeling that he was swindled... Bu Fang casually bounced the seed in his hand before storing it inside the system's storage space.

Even though he felt he had been swindled by Ji Chengxue, Bu Fang believed the system would not swindle him. If not for the system's mission, he would not have participated in the Hundred Family Banquet.

Since the system made him obtain this reward, it indicated that this seed was unusual.

The two brothers from Qingyangzhen were standing a distance away. Ah Lu was constantly taking out chicken drumsticks from his apron and popping them into his mouth, while Ah Wei was

staring at Bu Fang with bitterness in his heart.

"Big bro, looks like we failed the mission that master gave us. We can't bring back the reward for getting first place," Ah Lu said in a muffled voice.

Ah Wei did not say anything and merely lifted his sharp chin. His mind was rapidly spinning in an attempt to think up a method for obtaining the reward.

"Directly snatch the prize from him? That's out of the question..." he thought. Even though their cultivation levels were slightly higher than Bu Fang's, they were not much stronger than him. Furthermore, they would certainly be hindered by the guards if they openly tried to snatch the prize inside the imperial city.

Snatch something personally awarded by the emperor? They were not stupid.

"Should we make a deal with Owner Bu? However, is there anything valuable on us that could be used for an exchange?" Ah Wei muttered as his eyebrows crossed together.

"Big bro, what's the point of thinking so much? Let's just go back and tell master exactly what happened. If he really needs that prize, just let him provide an item for us to come and trade with Owner Bu. If he doesn't need it, then there's no need for us to do anything," Ah Lu said while holding a chicken drumstick in his hand.

Ah Wei gave Ah Lu a surprised glance, seemingly in disbelief. He thought, "What's going on with him today? Did he become smarter after going through a competition?"

"Alright, then let's immediately hurry back to Qingyangzhen and let Master settle this matter on his own. We've already done all we could. We lost because our skills are still lacking," Ah Wei said as he slung the black wok on his back and made his way out of the imperial city.

They really did not want to spend even a moment longer here. It was a place filled with sad memories for them.

Bu Fang gave their disappearing back figures a glance but did not pay much heed to them. After thanking Ji Chengxue, he bid farewell with Ouyang Xiaoyi and the others before walking out of the Gate of Heavenly Mystery and disappearing in the swirling snow.

With this, this year's Hundred Family Banquet had also come to a satisfactory end.

A group of eunuchs rushed out from the Main Hall and started clearing up the garbage and objects in the plaza.

...

Bu Fang fiddled with the black seed in his hand as he walked into the alleyway. Large snowflakes were unsteadily drifting down from the sky.

A piece of snowflake landed on the back of Bu Fang's neck and he slightly sucked his breath as a chill suddenly spread from the spot. He tucked his neck into his shoulders and quickened his pace as he headed toward the store.

As usual, Blacky was lying at the entrance of the store. It seemed to have felt Bu Fang's approach and slightly raised its head while blowing steam from its nostrils.

"Good morning, Blacky," Bu Fang said with a faint smile as he bounced the black seed in his hand. The time of the day was naturally not morning. The sky was already starting to get dark and the day was about to end. However, there should not be much of a difference for Blacky who spent every single day either eating or sleeping.

Blacky rolled its eyes and ignored Bu Fang's immature teasing. It turned its head away and was just about to go back to sleep. Suddenly, Blacky raised its head and its eyes focused on the black

seed in Bu Fang's hand.

Bu Fang had already removed the door board and was heading into the warm interior of the store. The seed in his hand was also casually kept into the system's storage space with a flip of his hand.

He was completely unaware of Blacky's gaze. If Bu Fang had seen the seriousness in Blacky's eyes at that moment, he would definitely not think the seed was useless.

Blacky's eyes revealed a hint of seriousness before turning into puzzlement and uncertainty after sniffing the air. In the end, it still let out a yawn and then went back to sleep.

...

Wuliang Mountain towered into the clouds like a sky-piercing stone pillar that reached into the skies.

At the peak of Wuliang Mountain, there was a rather decrepit monastery with a spacious courtyard and a majestic palace. The entire courtyard was shrouded with mist.

Beside the majestic palace, there was a small two-storey wooden cabin. An elderly man with white hair and eyebrows was quietly seated inside with his legs crossed. There were a few brownish yellow jade talismans with unusual markings on them placed on his wrinkled hand.

The elderly man seemed to be taking a nap. His eyes were closed and the faint sound of regular breathing was coming from the tip of his nose.

Suddenly, the jade talisman in his hand started to slightly shake. The elderly man woke up from his nap and slowly opened his hazy eyes. The color of his irises were an odd blue. From a single glance, he seemed capable of staring straight into the stars.

"Why is the Celestial Arcanum Talisman shaking on its own? I haven't started my divination and a strange phenomenon has already appeared. Is some sort of treasure about to appear on the

Hidden Dragon Continent once again?" the elderly man thought as he lifted up the jade talisman and stared at it with eyes that had seen through worldly desires.

With a casual point of his finger, the jade talisman immediately settled down and quietly lay down on the elderly man's hand. He stood up before tottering toward the window of the small cabin and sucked in a deep breath of cold air.

The elderly man stood in front of the window with his hands behind his back as he gazed at the layers of rolling clouds that surrounded the peak of Wuliang Mountain. Bright lights seemed to be circulating in his blue irises as if he was attempting to observe everything.

Afterward, he turned away and looked toward the disciples who were sweating like pigs in the courtyard of the Celestial Arcanum Palace.

This was the youngest generation of the Celestial Arcanum Sect and also the sect's foundation.

Suddenly, the elderly man looked into the distance after seemingly noticing something. He saw two figures moving at a rapid pace.

The person running in the front was an elderly man with shabby clothing and stubbles all over his face. He was moving across the courtyard in breakneck speed while hugging a wine calabash.

The person chasing the elderly man was a beautiful woman in a white dress whose hair spilled down her back like a waterfall. The woman's transcendent appearance was extremely beautiful like those of a banished immortal.

"Old drunkard! Stop right there! You promised to give me a tael of Dragon's Breath! You're going back on your word!" A rather alluring voice rang out. The outlines of her voluptuous figure was faintly discernible underneath her clothes as she indignantly

chased after the old drunkard in front of her.

The tip of the old man's nose was red and his graying hair was a mess. He turned his head and said with a snicker, "Brat, you're being underhanded. I promised to give you a tael of wine but that was on the condition that you have to finish the wine on the spot. You should know my rules well enough. You're welcomed to drink my wine but there's no way I am letting you take away the wine! Who knows what you're planning to do with the Dragon's Breath!"

True energy flowed within Ni Yan's body as she took a step forward and rushed toward him. She was so fast that it was nearly impossible to follow her movements. However, the old drunkard snickered and increased the distance between them with just a single step as if the ground shrank.

"You... You rotten old man! I am the third elder of our sect! Can't I even ask for a tael of wine!" Ni Yan was utterly exasperated.

"Ho ho, that's right. I don't care whether you're our sect's third elder or not. Even if the supreme elder wants my wine, I won't give it to him either! I've always been someone who sticks to my principles!" the old drunkard loudly snickered like an impish old man as he hugged his wine calabash. Ni Yan was grinding her teeth in anger as she watched him!

The elderly man in the wooden cabin suddenly let out a soft chuckle and took a step forward toward the window... His figure abruptly shook and then he actually disappeared without a trace.

Hum...

"Did you just say that you wouldn't give your wine even if the supreme elder was the one asking?" The old drunkard was suddenly startled by an elderly voice that came from behind him and his heart almost jumped out of his chest. He even fumbled with the wine calabash and nearly failed to catch it.

"If you take someone by surprise... you might really frighten that

person to death!" the old drunkard thought while silently cursing the supreme elder.

Chapter 157: Who Told You I'll Be Using Ordinary Ingredients?

"Su... supreme elder?!"

The old drunkard turned his head and his legs immediately went weak when he saw the elderly figure standing behind him. He was almost shocked to death from the sudden appearance of the supreme elder after just mentioning him moments ago.

With a gentle smile on his face, the elderly man casually waved his hand and the old drunkard's wine calabash fell into his hand. A hint of a smile appeared on his lips as he shook the calabash and the sound of sloshing came from within.

The elderly man uncorked the calabash and pinched his fingers together as a pearl-like droplet of wine floated out from the calabash.

"When I was younger, I was also someone who loved wine," the elderly man said with a chuckle. With a wave of his finger, the droplet of wine flew into his mouth. The droplet instantly expanded in volume and filled his mouth with wine.

The eyes of the elderly man narrowed as he reveled in the wine's flavor. He smacked his lips before tossing the wine calabash back to the old drunkard.

"This wine of yours is pretty good. Unfortunately, there's still room for improvement," the elderly man said with a faint smile.

The old drunkard's eyes immediately lit up after hearing the supreme elder's words. He looked toward the supreme elder and respectfully asked, "Supreme elder, is there really a wine that's even more delicious than the Dragon's Breath that I meticulously brewed?"

"Of course, there is. With the size of the world, all sorts of wondrous things exist and Hidden Dragon is only a small part of

this world. Besides, you'll soon get to taste a genuine fine wine," the elderly man said with a chuckle as he lightly stroked his white beard. Then, his eyes landed on Ni Yan and slightly narrowed.

"You've achieved a breakthrough? Not bad, not bad at all. Looks like the imperial city really is paradise for you," the elderly man said with a smile.

Ni Yan might have been impudent toward the old drunkard, but she was behaving somewhat reserved in front of the supreme elder, a legendary figure in the Celestial Arcanum Sect. "Yes, in the imperial city, I ate... I had a fortuitous meeting there."

"Hahaha, it's fine. It just so happens that I want you to go on another trip to the imperial city. In the near future, an unusual treasure will appear there. Do your best and try to obtain it. If you can't, it doesn't really matter either," the elderly man said with a chuckle while holding his hands behind his back.

Ni Yan was surprised for a moment. Go on another trip to the imperial city? Were things over there going to get lively once more?

...

The sky had already gone dark and Bu Fang was back in his store. He did not choose to open the store and was instead deep in thought as he sat on a chair.

The system's reward was already issued. He was originally going to cook the dish but all of his attention was currently focused on that seed.

"System, you made me obtain first place in the Hundred Family Banquet in order to get this seed? What's so special about it?" Bu Fang asked in puzzlement.

The system did not immediately reply him and remained silent for a long while before it solemnly replied, "The host currently does not have the qualification to acquire information related to

this seed. The host can only obtain information about this seed after the seed has been planted, germinated and bore fruit."

Bu Fang's face slightly darkened after hearing the system's response. What did the system mean by saying that he did not have the qualification to acquire information related to the seed? He was at the very least a man who could be called Battle-King!

Nonetheless, there was no point in getting angry. With the system's personality, Bu Fang knew he would definitely be unable to acquire the information since the system had already said so.

Fortunately, Bu Fang was not that obsessed with getting information on the seed either.

"How should I plant this? Where do I plant this seed?" Bu Fang asked.

"The system will provide a flowerpot for the host. Would the host please proceed with the planting of the seed," the system's solemn voice resounded once more. Afterward, Bu Fang sensed a flowerpot with the size of a washbasin suddenly appeared in the system's storage space.

"The Time Flow Flowerpot is capable of accelerating the germination and growth rate of the seed," the system introduced.

Bu Fang took out the extremely ugly ocher-colored flowerpot and placed the flowerpot in the corner of the store. The flowerpot was already filled to the brim with soil. According to the system's *modus operandi*, the soil contained inside the flowerpot was definitely something special as well.

He grabbed a handful of the soil and felt an extremely cold feeling in his hand that nearly froze his palm.

Bu Fang made a frown and then took out that black seed. He dug a small hole in the soil and dropped the seed inside before covering up the hole.

"Won't the seed die from the cold temperature of the soil? The

seed looks difficult to germinate in the first place, wouldn't using frozen soil make it even more difficult?" Bu Fang was feeling rather perplexed. However, this might really be the ideal condition for this seed to germinate.

Bu Fang stood up and dusted off his hands. He went into the kitchen and washed his hands with water.

He drew out a kitchen knife and practiced his cutting and carving techniques for a while before ending that day's training. The Hundred Family Banquet was exhausting for the chefs and Bu Fang was feeling slightly fatigued after a day's work.

Bu Fang went back into his room and took a nice long shower. The steam drifted out of the bathroom and filled his room.

After finishing his bath, Bu Fang comfortably lay down on his bed. He slowly closed his eyes and fell into a deep sleep.

The next morning, Bu Fang woke up as usual. After washing up, he left his room and went into the kitchen. Grabbing a kitchen knife and taking out some radishes, he started practicing his cutting technique. Practicing was even more important for level two of the Meteor Knife Technique. Furthermore, there was now a time limit as well.

Bu Fang did not neglect his carving technique either. After finishing the cutting technique training, he practiced his carving technique. His mastery of these two techniques was slowly improving.

After making a serving of Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs, Bu Fang walked out of the kitchen while sniffing the rich meaty aroma. He removed a doorboard and the cold air outside rushed into the store. After the Spring Festival ended, the snow became even heavier and the weather became much colder as well.

"Blacky, it's time to eat," Bu Fang called out as he tucked his neck into his shoulders and stepped out of the warm interior of the

store. Since he was wearing a thin layer of clothes, he immediately felt cold and goosebumps rose all over his body.

On the other hand, Blacky was not bothered by the cold weather in the slightest. Its eyes were only filled with the sight of the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs. It was panting with its tongue hanging out as it excitedly stared at the plate in Bu Fang's hands.

After putting down the plate of Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs in front of Blacky, Bu Fang immediately went back into the store. He was eager to get back into the cozy comfort of the store.

Just then, the sound of footsteps came from the direction of the alleyway and an already plump figure wrapped in thick layers of clothing appeared.

Bu Fang watched as Fatty Jin waddled into the store like a meatball. Fatty Jin exhaled a breath of cold air and said with a chuckle, "Good morning, Owner Bu. It's really cold outside today."

"The inside of this store is still the most comfortable after all. This warm feeling is making me feel like staying here forever," Fatty Jin said as he cheerfully sat down on a chair and took off his jacket.

Bu Fang expressionlessly nodded in response.

"By the way, the Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings from yesterday... can only be described as marvelous. They were so delicious that I almost swallowed my own tongue. I've never tasted anything as delicious as this dish before. Will you be selling the dish in the store?" Fatty Jin asked.

Bu Fang stared blankly for a moment and then subconsciously looked in the direction of the menu. Sure enough, the name of a particular dish was up there.

"Rainbow-colored Water Dumplings, one hundred crystals per serving."

Fatty Jin sucked in a breath of cold air and said, "One hundred

crystals per serving... Owner Bu, isn't this too expensive? The ingredients used in these dumplings are only ordinary ingredients. It's a little unreasonable for the price to be so high."

The majority of the dishes in Bu Fang's store contained abundant amounts of spirit energy and their flavors were unprecedentedly delicious because those dishes used expensive ingredients without any exception. However, the Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings that Fatty Jin ate the day before only used ingredients like ordinary fruits and vegetables. For the price to be set at such a price, it was simply too unjust.

Even though Fatty Jin was the owner of a crystal mine, he would still feel slightly distressed if he squandered money like this.

Fatty Jin's question startled Bu Fang for a moment. He was rather perplexed as he looked at Fatty Jin and asked, "Who told you that I'll be using ordinary ingredients for the Rainbow-Colored Water Dumplings?"

Chapter 158: The Sisters-In-Law of the Young Marquis

The Rainbow-colored Water Dumpling was originally a mission reward from the system. Therefore, it was impossible for the recipe to use ordinary ingredients. Bu Fang only chose to use ordinary fruits and vegetables during the Hundred Family Banquet in order to ensure that the dish could be eaten by all of the guests. However, now that the dish would be sold in the store, he was naturally going to use much more valuable ingredients.

When Bu Fang brought out the steaming bowl of Rainbow-colored Water Dumplings from the kitchen, the aroma wafting in the air was completely different from the dumplings made during the Hundred Family Banquet. The aroma of these Rainbow-colored Water Dumplings that used ingredients with spirit energy was fully spreading throughout the room.

"Gulp!" Fatty Jin was almost drooling as he stared at the bowl of Rainbow-colored Water Dumplings in Bu Fang's hands. The rich aroma emanating from it was simply too appetizing.

"Here's your Rainbow-colored Water Dumplings, please enjoy your meal," Bu Fang said as he placed the bowl of dumplings in front of Fatty Jin.

Fatty Jin's eyes were immediately attracted by the Rainbow-colored Water Dumplings. They were completely different from the Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings made during the Hundred Family Banquet. The actual version of the dumplings were miles ahead in terms of color, fragrance, and appearance.

There seemed to be a light constantly changing on those white dumplings. It was sometimes bright red and other times emerald green... The switching between the colors of a rainbow was bewitchingly beautiful.

A cloud of fragrance was also hovering above the soup. It was simmered with the meat of a spirit beast and was filled with spirit energy. With a single sniff, a burst of energy instantly coursed through Fatty Jin's entire body and made him feel extremely comfortable.

"The Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings were unable to fully manifest the colors of a rainbow because of the ingredients. At that time, I used a trick to trap the aroma and only managed to manifest the colors of a rainbow with the help of true energy. The actual version of the dumplings does not require special preparations like that. The ingredients alone would directly manifest the colors of a rainbow," Bu Fang explained.

Fatty Jin eagerly picked up a Rainbow-colored Water Dumpling with his chopsticks and took a bite. He suddenly felt as if he was standing underneath a waterfall. His entire body felt extremely comfortable as the falling water struck him.

He wanted to open his mouth and shout out loud. However, the moment he opened his mouth, his eyes widened because his mouth was instantly clogged up by the aroma.

Almost all of the flesh on Fatty Jin's face was trembling. His eyes were narrowed and his face was filled with pleasure. Delicious... It was simply too delicious.

A faint smile appeared on Bu Fang's lips as he glanced at Fatty Jin, who was revelling in the delicious flavors of the Rainbow-Colored Water Dumplings. Afterward, he pulled back a chair and sat down.

He subconsciously turned his head and looked toward the ocher-colored flowerpot sitting in the corner. He wondered how the seed was doing ever since he planted it yesterday.

Suddenly, his eyes widened as if he just discovered a new continent. A seedling throbbing with vitality was actually emerging from the ice-cold soil.

"It... germinated?" Bu Fang's face was filled with surprise. The speed of its growth was way too fast... Not even half a day had passed since he planted the seed.

However, Bu Fang quickly calmed down and walked toward the flowerpot. He squatted down next to it and carefully observed the seedling emerging from the soil.

The seedling was bright green in color and its surface was covered with complicated veined patterns. They looked like a blur in his eyes. Although he could not understand them, he was still amazed.

He leaned forward and sniffed the seedling but he could not smell a thing. Bu Fang was rather perplexed as he stood up. Nonetheless, he was too lazy to bother with the seedling any longer. With the help of the flowerpot, the seed should grow into a tall tree soon enough.

Ouyang Xiaoyi skipped into the store and cheerfully greeted Bu Fang. The latter nodded in response and continued to watch the falling snowflake outside while curled up on a chair.

From a distance, the sound of voices and feminine laughter came from the alleyway as several figures slowly approached.

Bu Fang puzzledly looked in the direction of the sounds and saw several slender and graceful women heading toward the store. Furthermore, there were people that he recognized in their midst.

"Juan'Er, I heard Owner Bu obtained first place in this year's Hundred Family Banquet. I'll bring you to eat something delicious today," Luo Sanniang said in a rambunctious manner. She was wearing a tight-fitting robe with slits on the sides of the lower part that revealed her fair and slender legs. She did not seem to feel cold despite the freezing weather.

There were a few other elegantly dressed women walking next to Luo Sanniang. One of them was a young-looking woman in a thick

woolen clothing. Her nose was slightly red from the cold air and she was huffing out clouds of white breath as she blindly followed after Luo Sanniang.

Yang Chen was excitedly leading the way in front of the group while wearing red festive clothing.

"My dear sisters-in-law, you definitely won't be disappointed by Owner Bu's culinary skill," the young Marquis confidently said. As someone who had personally tasted Bu Fang's dishes before, he was naturally aware of their deliciousness.

The group arrived in front of the store and saw the big black dog lying on the ground as well as Bu Fang who was curled up on a chair... Both of them had the same slothful appearance. It was no surprise considering that they were from the same store.

"What an adorable doggy!" the young-looking woman in the thick woolen clothing suddenly cried out in joy when she spotted the big black dog soundly sleeping in front of the store. She then ran forward and petted Blacky's head with her delicate, fair hand.

Blacky was rather dumbfounded as it looked at the young lady whose eyes were filled with affection. This young lady was only a mere third grade Battle-Maniac. The Lord Dog was capable of killing her even with a sneeze. However, with the Lord Dog's identity, what was the point of getting back at a little girl?

Therefore, the Lord Dog changed its sleeping position and went back to sleep.

"This doggy... is really adorable." Juan'Er's eyes were shining as she rubbed Blacky's nice and warm head with both of her hands while giggling.

Bu Fang blinked in surprise as he looked at the lazy dog who was too lazy to even respond. He mockingly thought, "This lazy dog... If the one vigorously rubbing its head was a man, it would've already greeted him with its paws." Bu Fang was well aware of the

formidableness of this lazy dog's paws.

"You over there... come into the store if you're going to order something. Teasing that dog is prohibited," Bu Fang said as he stood up. Even though he did not know whether the lazy dog would get angry, he thought it was better to draw this woman away.

Luo Sanniang gave that black dog a fearful glance. When she saw that Juan'Er was actually rubbing its head, her heart almost jumped out in terror. The naive Juan'Er might not know this dog's identity, but how could she not know? This dog... was the widely rumored supreme beast!

It was a supreme beast that could kill Juan'Er thousands of times with a single sneeze!

Luo Sanniang was dumbfounded. Should she think of her as innocent or just really bold... When she saw that Blacky did not seem to intend on getting even with Juan'Er, she breathed out a sigh of relief inwardly and then went into the store while dragging along the reluctant Juan'Er.

The interior of the store was very warm and cozy. The group of women felt as if they had just stepped into a spring-like zone. The aroma of the dishes wafting in the air was especially mesmerizing.

The young Marquis excitedly stopped in front of Bu Fang. He patted his own chest and said, "Owner Bu, these are my sisters-in-law. I am treating them today, so just bring out whatever is delicious!"

Bu Fang expressionlessly glanced at Yang Chen and his mouth widened into a smile as he gave the women behind him a glance.

"All of the dishes here are delicious, so just order whatever you want to eat," Bu Fang mildly replied.

His reply resulted in a rather embarrassed expression on Yang Chen's face. Every single dish in Owner Bu's store was excellent. If

he ordered every dish... Yang Chen gave his money pouch a little squeeze and awkwardly sniffed.

"I think I'll just stop showing off..." Yang Chen thought.

Luo Sanniang put her hands at her waist and laughed. Juan'Er and the others were also chuckling while covering their mouths with their hands.

Thereafter, everyone turned to look at the menu behind them and froze momentarily before they started chattering with each other.

Chapter 159: Spirit Turtle Egg Tart

"Juan'Er, what do you want to eat? Hurry up and tell Owner Bu!" Luo Sanniang said with a smile as she put her arm around Juan'Er's delicate shoulders in a boisterous manner. Juan'Er was the only one left who had not ordered, so she could not help but remind her.

Juan'Er shyly gave the menu a glance and seemed rather embarrassed to speak her thoughts. All of the dishes on the menu were delicious, so... she wanted to order all of them. However, if she did that, that would give others a bad impression of her.

"Owner Bu... Spirit Turtle Egg Tart... What's that? Is it delicious?" Juan'Er softly asked in a voice that was gentle like water.

Bu Fang was slightly startled. Spirit Turtle Egg Tart? Wasn't that the new dish? That was the mission reward for getting first place in the Hundred Family Banquet, which he still had not checked after all this time. He did not anticipate that the dish would already be added onto the menu.

"Spirit Turtle Egg Tart is just Spirit Turtle Egg Tart. It's very delicious," Bu Fang said as he gave Juan'Er a glance.

Juan'Er's eyes immediately lit up. She realized that none of her sisters-in-law ordered this particular dish, so she was rather tempted to do so.

"Then... I'll have a serving of Spirit Turtle Egg Tart," Juan'Er said while pointing at the menu on the wall with her slender hand.

Bu Fang nodded in response and told them to wait before heading into the kitchen.

Meanwhile, Yang Chen led his sisters-in-law toward a table on his own. His sisters-in-law were rather pleased by the comfortable layout and furnishing of the store.

Cold sweat was actually dripping down Yang Chen's back. Every single one of his sisters-in-law was extremely tough and their cultivation levels were pretty high as well... Oh, except for his second sister-in-law, Juan'Er, who was a bashful young lady.

Today, Yang Chen brought four of his sisters-in-law. Three of them were the wives of his brothers while the last one was the wife of his cousin. They were all women of the Yang family who were capable at both public and domestic affairs.

He had always been praising Owner Bu's culinary skill in front of his sisters-in-law, so he specially brought them here today.

Bu Fang entered the kitchen and started cooking the dishes ordered by the customers one after another. His movements were extremely proficient. After cooking the same dishes every single day, he was naturally becoming more efficient and his cooking speed became even faster.

"Xiaoyi, serve the dish."

After finishing each dish, he placed the dish at the window and called for Ouyang Xiaoyi.

In the meantime, he continued to focus all of his attention on cooking the dishes.

Soon, he finished cooking all of the dishes with the exception of the Spirit Turtle Egg Tart, which the delicate beauty ordered at the end.

Bu Fang was naturally quite familiar with egg tarts. However, he was actually feeling somewhat perplexed and bewildered. All along, he assumed that the system was only going to provide recipes of oriental style dishes. Contrary to his expectation, the Spirit Turtle Egg Tart suddenly appeared.

Bu Fang washed his hands with water and then his mouth widened into a smile. He focused his mind and started poring over the steps of cooking the dish provided by the system.

After muttering to himself for a while, Bu Fang finished memorizing all of the steps and then took out a large blue and white porcelain bowl from a cupboard.

The cooking process of egg tarts was more complicated. Bu Fang took out tools and ingredients from the cupboards one after another, which included a bag of graham flour, a cup of milk from an unknown spirit beast, a cup of evaporated milk, and a few Spirit Turtle eggs.

The first step was making the crust of the egg tart. Bu Fang mixed the flour with water and added butter before kneading the mixture into dough. While adding the water, he employed some techniques. Instead of pouring everything at once, he slowly poured the water to adjust the hardness of the dough.

When the outside of the dough was smooth, Bu Fang stopped kneading. He stored the dough inside a cupboard prepared by the system and let it rest for a while.

After waiting for some time, he took out the rested dough. He first sprinkled some flour on a chopping board and rolled the dough into a rectangular shape with a rolling pin. Next, Bu Fang utilized the true energy within his body to churn the dough. Each time the dough was folded, it would be filled with true energy which caused every inch of the dough to be flipped inside out.

The kneading method was the same as the one that Bu Fang employed while making dumplings during the Hundred Family Banquet. This was a kneading technique that Bu Fang developed on his own. However, this technique required the user to have precise control over their true energy.

Once a mistake was made, the internal structure of the dough would become uneven and the crust may crack during the baking process.

After folding a few times, the dough was placed back into the cupboard once more to let it rest and Bu Fang moved on to making

the custard of the egg tart.

The flavor of an egg tart mainly depended on its custard.

He took out the Spirit Turtle eggs. These eggs were small and there were some ugly markings on their surface. There was even a faint fragrance emanating from them. Bu Fang first poured the spirit beast milk and evaporated milk into the blue and white porcelain bowl. Then, he added some high quality granulated sugar into the mixture and started mixing.

When the mixture was evenly stirred and the granulated sugar was fully melted, Bu Fang cracked the Spirit Turtle eggs into the bowl.

There was some skill involved in cracking the eggs as well because only the egg yolk was needed. Therefore, Bu Fang could not let the egg white fall into the mixture or the flavor would be affected.

Bu Fang nimbly broke open an egg with his fingers. Just as the egg yolk touched the mixture in the bowl, he instantly caught the egg white with the egg shells and perfectly separated the egg white from the egg yolk.

After adding egg yolks from a few Spirit Turtle eggs, Bu Fang continued stirring the mixture.

After stirring for a while, the color of the mixture was changing from milky white into pastel yellow. Furthermore, the consistency of the mixture was thickening after stirring for so long.

Bu Fang took out a strainer and strained the liquid mixture. Once that was done, only a paste formed from egg yolk and milk was left.

Bu Fang then took out the rested dough from the cupboard and cut out round pieces with an exquisite cutting technique.

An egg tart mold was conveniently prepared by the system, which slightly surprised Bu Fang.

Once the pieces of dough were fitted into the mold and the creamy paste was poured into the mold as well, Bu Fang finished the initial step of making the egg tarts.

The kitchen was well-equipped. After Bu Fang placed the egg tarts into the oven, he just had to wait.

Bu Fang was feeling somewhat excited as he looked at the Spirit Turtle Egg Tarts that were gradually changing inside the oven. He was staring at them without blinking while waiting in anticipation for the completion of the egg tarts.

Fortunately, the oven provided by the system was very efficient and the baking was done before long.

As Bu Fang pulled open the oven's door, a rich aroma of milk and eggs gushed out.

The Spirit Turtle eggs possessed a sort of bewitching fragrance in the first place. After getting processed in such a manner, the aroma became even more intense.

Bu Fang smacked his lips in anticipation. Even though the grade of the Spirit Turtle eggs was not that high, its aroma after getting cooked was extremely good.

As Bu Fang removed the egg tarts from the mold, the tender and fragrant Spirit Turtle Egg Tarts appeared before him.

He greedily inhaled the aroma wafting in the air. The smell of the spirit beast milk was almost captivating.

Bu Fang placed two of the egg tarts onto a white porcelain plate before walking out of the kitchen while carrying the plate.

The attention of the customers within the store were already attracted by the aroma wafting out of the kitchen. They were eagerly staring at Bu Fang as he slowly walked out of the darkness.

Bu Fang was carrying a white plate in his hand with a weirdly-shaped food placed on top. A rich fragrance and steam was rising

from the plate.

"Here's your Spirit Turtle Egg Tarts, please enjoy your meal," Bu Fang said as he placed the Spirit Turtle Egg Tarts in front of Juan'Er, who was already filled with anticipation.

Juan'Er's eyes were sparkling as she looked at the strange dish in front of her, which was both exquisite and extremely adorable but also bewitchingly fragrant. She was very excited and her delicate face was flushed in embarrassment.

"This dish has a really unusual shape, is this a pastry?" Juan'Er asked in curiosity. She also enjoyed cooking and she was most proficient in making pastries. Therefore, she was quite excited about the egg tarts which somewhat resembled pastries.

Bu Fang gave this bashful woman a glance and replied with a frown, "This isn't a [pastry](#)... You can think of this as an after-meal dessert."

"This aroma is really fragrant, it's not something that pastries could compare with... An after-meal dessert? Hmm, I'm really looking forward to this!" Juan'Er's eyes narrowed and her face became flushed once more.

"Juan'Er, are you going to eat that? If you're not, then I'll go ahead and eat them! This smell is too fragrant, I'm really craving for them..." Luo Sanniang said in a boisterous manner while looking on from the side.

Hearing that, Juan'Er hurriedly grabbed one of the egg tarts in panic. The egg tart was still somewhat hot to the touch and caused Juan'Er to lightly yell out in surprise. She quickly blew on the egg tart before taking a bite out of it.

Egg tarts are pastries. I think Bu Fang is just differentiating between Chinese and Western pastries here as pastry(糕点) and dessert(甜点) respectively.

Chapter 160: Juan'Er's Egg Tarts of Darkness

Her rosebud mouth slightly opened and closed down on the soft and crispy Spirit Turtle Egg Tart, biting off a small piece while her face was flushed in anticipation. As she chewed her food with minimal jaw movements, she demonstrated the mannerism of a lady from a noble family.

The longer she chewed, the more her eyes widened. The delicious flavor instantly spread from her mouth and coursed throughout her body. The rich aroma of milk engulfed her and made her feel as if she was standing among a herd of spirit beasts.

A gentle wind breezed past as the herd of spirit beasts quietly grazed on the verdant field of grass.

"Hmm..." As Juan'Er swallowed the morsel of egg tart in her mouth, she was suddenly overwhelmed by a strange feeling that caused her to let out a moan. Her pretty face became even redder as if she was intoxicated. A breeze carrying the strong smell of the sea came whistling toward her as if attempting to blow her clothes away.

"De... delicious!" Juan'Er earnestly said with eyes filled with delight.

This was her first time tasting such a delicious dish. She could not believe that the feeling of being immersed in a surging ocean actually came from such a tiny egg tart. It was simply unbelievable.

She no longer cared about the hotness of the egg tart as she clasped the egg tart in her hands and gnawed at the egg tart. She was completely unable to stop herself. Her face was flushed as if she was basking in the happiness of the delicious flavor.

Luo Sanniang's mouth was wide open as she stared at Juan'Er who was currently ruining her own image. Was this still the

Juan'Er that she knew? That Juan'Er who carried the mannerism of a young lady from a noble family, smiled without exposing her teeth, and ate her meals at a snail's pace?

Luo Sanniang felt as if her world view was completely overturned. Was Owner Bu's dish really that enchanting?

Yang Chen was also curiously watching Juan'Er whose face was filled with pleasure as he ate his Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs. This was unlike his impression of his second sister-in-law.

Bu Fang had never tasted the egg tarts before as this was his first time making them. Therefore, he did not know what Juan'Er was feeling at the moment. However, he knew the taste of the egg tarts were pretty good based on her reaction.

A smile appeared on Bu Fang's lips before he let out a deep breath and sat down on a chair for a small break.

After finishing the first egg tart, Juan'Er immediately picked up the second one. She lightly exhaled from her mouth and then continued eating. She completely lost the grace and elegance of a young lady from a noble family. At that moment, she seemed like a glutton who was enjoying her favorite food.

The two egg tarts disappeared into her mouth before the eyes of the bewildered Luo Sanniang and Yang Chen just like that. Their mouths were hanging wide open from astonishment.

"I'm done eating! Owner Bu... These Spirit Turtle Egg Tarts... are truly delicious!" Juan'Er placed her hands together and bowed toward Bu Fang as she earnestly said, "Thank you for letting me taste such a delicious dish."

Bu Fang blinked in surprise. Her solemn attitude made him feel slightly uneasy, so he only responded with a rather awkward nod.

Yang Chen and the others soon finished eating as well. The group ordered quite an amount of dishes.

Seeing the pained expression on Yang Chen's face as he paid the

bill, the group of women could not help but chuckle while covering their mouths. Oh, other than Luo Sanniang, who openly laughed with her hands placed on her waist...

"My dear sisters-in-law, like I've said before, Owner Bu's culinary skill is definitely the best in the imperial city! No one believed me back then. What about now?" Yang Chen seriously said while lifting up his chin.

Luo Sanniang was slightly annoyed when she saw Yang Chen's smug expression. She struck him on the back of his head with her palm and said in exasperation, "Why are you the one bragging when you're not Owner Bu? Since we're done eating, let's go back and train some more. In a few more days, the Marquis will be checking your cultivation level. When the time comes, you're really going to get it if you don't meet his standard!"

Yang Chen's expression immediately sank like a wrinkled tomato as he weakly headed outside of the store.

The group of women left one after another as well after bidding farewell with Bu Fang. The store suddenly regained its tranquility once more.

...

Juan'Er returned to the Marquis' Manor in a daze. She was somewhat distracted during the return trip and even nearly tripped over when getting off the carriage.

Fortunately, Luo Sanniang was right next to her the entire time and managed to stop her from falling face first into the mud.

"Juan'Er... What's wrong? Are you not feeling well?" Luo Sanniang asked with a frown.

Juan'Er's eyes were dull and lifeless. Suddenly, she looked up at Luo Sanniang with a gaze that sent chills up her spine.

"Good heavens... It's terrifying if you stare at me like that!" Luo Sanniang thought as a chill went up her spine.

"Sanniang, come with me to the kitchen, I'll cook something for you! You must help me taste my cooking!" Juan'Er pitifully pleaded while placing her hands together.

Luo Sanniang was surprised for a moment and then she was immediately dragged into the kitchen by Juan'Er.

"Xiao Chen'zi, make sure to practice hard. I'll come and check your training later..." Even while she was being dragged away, Luo Sanniang did not forget to nag at Yang Chen.

...

"Bang!"

From the kitchen of the Marquis' Manor, a dull sound rang out and was followed by the faint smell of something burnt drifting out...

Luo Sanniang was standing in the kitchen while looking at Juan'Er, whose face was covered in soot. The latter was holding a white porcelain plate and staring at Luo Sanniang with her innocent eyes.

"Sanniang, these are the egg tarts that I made, give them a taste!"

Luo Sanniang's gaze froze for a moment and then shifted toward the contents on the porcelain plate. She saw a pile of weirdly shaped lumps covered in burnt marks on the plate. The faint smell of something burnt was emanating from them.

"Egg tarts? Are you telling me those things are egg tarts?"

Recalling Owner Bu's Spirit Turtle Egg Tarts and then looking at the black lumps made by Juan'Er in front of her eyes, Luo Sanniang suddenly felt the entire world had turned dark.

"Juan... Juan'Er, are you sure... this thing is edible?" Luo Sanniang asked in bewilderment, which Juan'Er responded by continuously nodding.

"Just have a bite and stop eating if doesn't taste good." Juan'Er

was filled with expectation as she stared at Luo Sanniang.

Luo Sanniang could not stand Juan'Er's pitiful appearance and immediately acceded to her request. She picked up a badly burnt egg tart and slowly observed its surface. She finally found a spot which was not burnt and started eating.

"Hmm?" The disgusted frown on Luo Sanniang's face suddenly disappeared and she gave Juan'Er a surprised glance. As she chewed the morsel in her mouth, she exclaimed in astonishment, "Juan'Er, you're incredible. This actually tastes pretty good. Even though the aroma and appearance are a lot worse than Owner Bu's Spirit Turtle Egg Tarts, the taste is still alright!"

Luo Sanniang was speaking the truth. Juan'Er's culinary skill was pretty good in the first place. She frequently helped the cook of the Marquis' Manor with making the side dishes. Furthermore, she also enjoyed making pastries as a hobby. Her culinary skill was not weak in the slightest.

The taste of the extremely unappetizing egg tarts before her eyes were still passable.

"That's great, then I shall bring them over to Owner Bu tomorrow and let him give me some advice. I've discovered that I've fallen in love with egg tarts! I must research the recipe for making egg tarts!" Juan'Er excitedly said.

Luo Sanniang's face stiffened for a moment. The corners of her mouth twitched as she stared blankly at Juan'Er, whose expression was serious.

"Let Owner Bu taste them... Are you sure about that?"

...

It was a dark and windy night with a snowstorm raging on.

Inside the alleyway, the store had already closed up for the day and the tranquility in the store was restored. Bu Fang was bustling about in the kitchen. After a short while, he finished making an

egg tart and was tasting this delicious dish himself.

The Spirit Turtle Eggs which were filled with spirit energy had a flavor that was far superior to ordinary chicken eggs. After tasting the egg tart, he felt as if he was submerged in the deep ocean.

"The taste of this egg tart is not bad at all... However, it's still rather lacking as a reward for this time's mission." The taste of the Spirit Turtle Egg Tart was indeed pretty good but receiving such a dish as a reward after spending so much effort to obtain first place in the Hundred Family Banquet was evidently quite unfair for him.

The egg tart was delicious but it was still just an after-meal dessert in the end...

"Is it because the previous abrupt mission is not completed yet? Therefore, the mission reward given this time was so pathetic?" Bu Fang muttered to himself with a frown.

The previous system mission required Bu Fang to develop and brew a wine that could surpass Dragon's Breath. According to Ni Yan's explanation, that Dragon's Breath should have been produced through numerous complex processes. It was definitely going to be hard to surpass.

Bu Fang was pondering over the problem while he headed for his room. Since it was time, he was going to bed to maintain his sleep.

"I need to find some time to gather some high grade spirit herbs. If I want to develop a wine that surpasses Dragon's Breath, relying solely on the Phoenix Blood Herb and Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit is still not enough... I still need to find some other ingredients!"

Bu Fang lay down on his bed and pulled a thick blanket over himself. As he pondered about the problem, he slowly closed his eyes and fell into a deep sleep.

Chapter 161: The Ghost Chef of Qingyangzhen

Qingyangzhen was located right outside the Wildlands. It was a frontier town established by the Light Wind Empire because the Wildlands was a dangerous location with numerous spirit beasts nesting there. Some of these spirit beasts were powerful while others were weak. The stronger ones were even capable of attaining unimaginable levels, while the weaker ones were only third or fourth grade spirit beasts.

The outskirts, inner layer, and central zone of the Wildlands were like three circles nesting in each other and the spirit beasts residing inside were innumerable. Qingyangzhen, as the frontier town guarding the entrance to the Wildlands, naturally bore the brunt of the pressure.

Once the amount of spirit beasts exceeded a certain number, disastrous events like a stampede of spirit beasts would occur. Numerous spirit beasts would rush out from the Wildlands and trample on everything in their path. It was definitely a disaster for the residents of Qingyangzhen and only those who truly possessed strength could survive in such a calamity.

Qingyangzhen was such a town, where the strong gathered. Every single person who made a living there possessed high cultivation levels. The majority of them were adventurers from all around the Hidden Dragon Continent. They were not just from the Light Wind Empire, but also from other smaller countries.

They were gathered here in order to gain experience in the Wildlands as well as obtain crystals.

Through hunting spirit beasts, they were able to earn crystals by turning in the corpses. Every single spirit beast was a trove of treasure and could be used to exchange for many things. With profit as the driving force, many people would still arrive wave

after wave even if they had to face terrifying stampedes of spirit beasts.

The Number One Restaurant In [Qingyangzhen](#) was the only restaurant in the entire town and the first floor of the two-storey building was extremely spacious. The inside of the building was buzzing with activity and a steady stream of people was entering and leaving.

The aroma of wine and the fragrance of the dishes were wafting in the air. Shouts and laughter could also be occasionally heard.

In short, the scene within the restaurant was lively.

As Ah Lu who was gnawing on a chicken drumstick and Ah Wei who was carrying a black wok on his back stepped into the restaurant, a curvaceous and beautiful woman in revealing clothing approached them with her hips swaying. She said with a giggle, "Oh my, Ah Lu and Ah Wei, you're back? How did it go? Have you completed the old man's mission?"

Ah Lu pulled out a chicken drumstick from his apron and took a bite. As he chewed the morsel in his mouth with crunching noises, he said in a mumble, "Aunt Yue, we lost. As expected of the Light Wind Empire's capital, it's indeed brimming with talented individuals. Even though big bro brought out his trump card, he still lost in the end."

Ah Wei's face darkened and only gave the enchanting beauty a glance without saying anything. There was really nothing for him to explain. A loss was a loss. He could only blame himself for his own ineptitude in learning.

A hint of surprise immediately appeared on the lovely face of Aunt Yue. She thought, "Ah Lu and Ah Wei actually lost in the Hundred Family Banquet... even with their culinary skills? Has the culinary skill level of the Light Wind Empire's chefs really become that terrifying?"

"After all, Ah Lu and Ah Wei were personally taught by that old man!"

"It's alright, losing is fine too. It's better than having the two of you think your culinary skills are unrivalled under the heavens. It's not a bad thing for the two of you to suffer a little setback," Aunt Yue said with a chuckle as the mounds of flesh on her chest jiggled, causing the eyes of the customers in the room to light up.

The expressions on Ah Wei's and Ah Lu's faces immediately sank as they scanned their surroundings in displeasure before heading toward the second floor of the restaurant.

They stepped onto the second floor and produced creaking noises as they treaded on the seemingly old and rickety floorboards. The illumination gradually grew dimmer as the two proceeded and soon came to a halt before a small room.

Ah Wei respectfully knocked on the door and the ever-present arrogance on his face disappeared without a trace.

"Come in." After an elderly voice came from inside the room, the two brothers looked each other in the eye before entering.

"Master..."

Ah Lu and Ah Wei lowered their heads and softly called out to an elderly man dressed in a gray robe.

The elderly man was sitting on a sandalwood rocking chair while lightly waving a fan made from the feathers of an unknown spirit beast.

"You lost? And failed to obtain the prize?" There was a hint of mockery in the elderly man's tone, which made Ah Wei feel a sudden burst of shame. Before setting off, he confidently said he would definitely bring back the prize but he returned in defeat instead.

"I've already said before, the Hidden Dragon Continent is an extremely large place. Your worldview only encompasses a single

well. If you observe the world while sitting in a well, you'll feel as if you're in possession of the entire world. However, in truth, you're only amusing yourself in a microscopic world," the elderly man said as he stopped the rocking chair.

The elderly man then stood up and his gaze landed on the two brothers. His face covered with wrinkles trembled for a moment before he said with a chuckle, "It's fine, there's no need for the two of you to blame yourselves either. Just take this as a lesson. A single failure is nothing. Work hard and take revenge on your own."

"Yes... Master, in truth, if I had used the Hundred Flavors Pot, I might not have lost!" Ah Wei was still somewhat unable to admit defeat.

The elderly man gave Ah Wei a glance and shook his head. "I passed on the Hundred Flavor Pot so that you'll let it ferment for ten years. If you use it in advance, that would only result in a loss in its energies. So what if you had obtained victory? The things you would lose... would far exceed what you would obtain. You should rejoice in the fact that you did not use the Hundred Flavors Pot.

"Ah Lu, describe the circumstances of your loss to me," the elderly man said.

Ah Lu was surprised for a moment and subconsciously reached out for a chicken drumstick. However, he stopped after thinking for a moment and seriously started narrating the events that occurred on that day.

The elderly man quietly listened on as Ah Lu gave a narration on what happened that day.

"Rainbow-colored Crescent Moon Dumplings? A dish made from ordinary ingredients was able to defeat Ah Wei's dish within a dish?" The elderly man's eyes narrowed as a hint of severity appeared on his face. "Since when did such a formidable chef

appear in the Light Wind Empire? In order for dishes made from ordinary ingredients to win against those made from spirit energy ingredients, the flavors and textures of the ingredients must be fully exhibited. This is an extremely difficult task for any chef to accomplish..."

"Crunch, crunch. Master... The prize was won by that Owner Bu as well," Ah Lu said in a mumble while gnawing on a chicken drumstick.

The elderly man nodded and then started laughing while clapping his hands. "I didn't think anyone in the Light Wind Empire would still dare to compete over something with me, the Ghost Chef... I suddenly feel like meeting this Owner Bu."

Ah Wei was stunned for a moment and then his pupils constricted. He thought, "Is master going to personally make a move?"

"The seed of the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit Tree... If it's successfully germinated, I wonder how big of a disturbance would occur," the elderly man quietly muttered.

...

The sun had just risen over the horizon and sunlight was piercing through the clouds, illuminating the land with a golden gleam.

Snow was no longer falling but the temperature was still icy cold.

Bu Fang cooked a serving of Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs for Blacky as usual and then started practicing his cutting and carving techniques as well as cooking dishes.

Since he was aiming to become the God of Cooking, he was obviously unable to slack off in the slightest. Practicing everyday was absolutely essential because practice would gradually improve his culinary skill and strengthen his fundamental skills.

Within the ocher-colored flowerpot, the bit of greenery was growing taller and taller. The seedling which had just emerged

from the soil the day before had already grown to a finger tall. It was indeed rather astonishing.

The aquamarine-colored leaves were covered with mysterious markings that made Bu Fang's vision blurry from looking at them.

"Just what exactly is this seed? Will something good grow from this?" Bu Fang puzzledly muttered as he touched a leaf with his finger. Then, he got up and went to remove the doorboards.

Fatty Jin came in a mad rush along with his army of obese men. After all this time, Bu Fang had become rather familiar with them. He entered the kitchen and soon came out with their food.

Ouyang Xiaoyi arrived together with the Xiao siblings. Xiao Yanyu was wearing a veil and appeared gentle and refined as always.

After their arrival, Luo Sanniang and a rather bashful figure arrived as well, which slightly surprised Bu Fang.

"Owner Bu, Juan'Er is looking for you. Are you available?"

The moment Luo Sanniang stepped into the store, she immediately started yelling out loud. This woman was quite attractive looking but did not possess even a shred of feminine quality...

Meanwhile, Juan'Er was shyly following after Luo Sanniang while carrying a lunch box. She was slightly out of breath as she stepped into the store.

Number One Restaurant In Qingyangzhen - That's the name of the restaurant.

Chapter 162: This Egg Tart... Tastes Awful

Bu Fang looked at the two of them in puzzlement. He was already used to Luo Sanniang's raucous behavior but why was this Juan'Er coming into his store with a lunch box?

Bu Fang gave the two a suspicious glance and then said with a smirk, "I am busy."

Luo Sanniang's expression suddenly stiffened for a moment and her eyebrows immediately knitted together. "What did you say?"

"It's opening hours right now... so I am busy. You're welcomed if you're here to eat. However, if you're seeking me for other reasons, please wait until opening hours is over," Bu Fang directly ignored Luo Sanniang's dissatisfied gaze and headed back into the kitchen.

"You... You rascal!" Luo Sanniang was furious. She was naturally well aware of Bu Fang's rules. However, she was unable to stand Bu Fang's attitude. Within the imperial city, who would dare speak to her, Luo Sanniang, in such a manner?!

"Sanniang, there's no hurry. Owner Bu is right, it's opening hours right now. We can't disturb other people's business," Juan'Er hurriedly said while grabbing onto Luo Sanniang who seemed as if she was about to fly into a rage. Her face was flushed with a trace of anxiousness.

In the end, Luo Sanniang gave in under Juan'Er's pleading gaze. She was actually not that angry. She was simply peeved by Bu Fang's attitude.

"I'll listen to you. In that case, let's eat something here while we wait. Even though that rascal is stuck-up and has a bad temper, his dishes are really delicious!" Luo Sanniang said while her eyes scanned her surroundings in search of a seat.

"Come here and sit down with us," Xiao Yanyu called out while beckoning to them with her fair and slender hand.

"My goodness, Yanyu, you're here as well." Luo Sanniang's eyes immediately brightened when she saw the Xiao siblings. She walked over toward them while pulling along Juan'Er and sat down next to Xiao Yanyu. "Oh my, Xiao Xiaolong. You little sissy, you're here too? What a coincidence."

After hearing her words, Xiao Xiaolong almost vomited out a mouthful of blood in anger. Every time he met her, Luo Sanniang would call him a sissy. This was simply... maddening!

"Coincidence... My ass!" Xiao Xiaolong thought while letting out a snort and ignored Luo Sanniang by turning his head away from her.

"Xiaoyi, serve the dish," Bu Fang's voice came from the kitchen as a rich fragrance filled the entire place and caused everyone present to become slightly mesmerized.

Hearing that, Xiaoyi skipped over to the serving window and took away the dish placed there.

The atmosphere within the store was caught up in an excitement toward food once more. Everyone was heartily enjoying their meals.

When most of the customers finished their food and left after paying their bill, the store gradually regained its quietness once more.

"Owner Bu, are you finally free now?" Luo Sanniang asked in annoyance while rubbing her slightly bulging stomach.

Bu Fang wiped off the water droplets on his hands before he pulled a chair over and sat down. He looked at Luo Sanniang and nodded.

"Well, what do you want? I can't promise I'll be able to help even for ordinary matters," Bu Fang said.

Luo Sanniang raised her eyebrows in response. However, she could not be bothered to get angry with Bu Fang anymore. She

pulled Juan'Er over and said, "Juan'Er is the one looking for you."

Bu Fang was surprised for a moment. He gave the bashful woman before his eyes a glance, noticing her face was flushed in embarrassment. He could not figure out her intention for finding him.

Juan'Er seemed to have plucked up a lot of her courage as she placed the lunch box in front of Bu Fang and solemnly said, "Owner Bu... I... Yesterday, I went back home and tried making your... egg tarts. So, I want you to taste them."

"Hmm? This woman made egg tarts after returning home yesterday?"

Bu Fang was startled as he gave her a surprised glance. The steps of making egg tarts were rather complicated. Did she really make them after only eating them once?

Bu Fang was immediately filled with curiosity. He really wanted to see just what sort of egg tart this woman managed to make.

"You made egg tarts? Hmm... Show them to me," Bu Fang said.

Juan'Er originally thought Bu Fang would refuse. Contrary to her expectation, Bu Fang actually agreed to her request. Her eyes immediately brightened. She hurriedly opened the lunch box and carefully took out a porcelain plate. In the middle of the plate, there was an... umm, egg tart.

The corners of Bu Fang's mouth involuntarily twitched as he expressionlessly looked at the egg tart placed in front of him. He felt like laughing but found himself unable to do so.

Even though the thing before his eyes resembled an egg tart, its color and smell was... Even from a distance, Bu Fang could smell a strange aroma.

"Is this burnt?" Bu Fang asked with a frown as he picked up Juan'Er's egg tart and looked at the burnt marks on its surface.

"I... I couldn't control the heat properly. This is already the best one," Juan'Er said.

Bu Fang nodded without thinking her answer was strange. Afterall, there were no ovens in the Light Wind Empire. It would be weird if she could actually make egg tarts without burning them. The fact that Juan'Er could actually produce an egg tart like this was already pretty good.

Thus, Bu Fang did not say anything else. He found a spot that was not burnt and chomped down.

The egg tart made by Juan'Er was not soft enough and was actually rather hard. Furthermore, it was baked for too long and became uncomfortable to chew.

While Bu Fang was tasting the egg tart, a frown was on his face the entire time. His expression was very solemn.

Everyone within the store was holding their breaths as they watched Bu Fang. He was awe-inspiring whenever he was appraising dishes.

Xiao Yanyu and Xiao Xiaolong had both witnessed Bu Fang's venomous tongue before. They could more or less predict what was going to happen next... The dish was definitely going to get roasted by Bu Fang.

After swallowing the morsel in his mouth, the frown disappeared from Bu Fang's face. He glanced at the bashful woman standing next to him, whose hands were nervously clasped together. For a moment, he was at a loss for words.

Honestly speaking... the egg tart could be considered a [dark cuisine](#). It was simply hard for anyone to sing praises about its taste. However, it was still much better than actual dark cuisine. At the very least, it was still edible.

However, when strictly evaluated through every aspect, this egg tart was completely worthless.

Nonetheless, this was her first time making egg tarts. After only tasting them a day before, she came to find him with the egg tart for his evaluation. Just this courage and willpower alone was enough to impress Bu Fang.

"Owner Bu, why don't you say something? Just tell us whether it's good or not," Luo Sanniang said. She was an impatient person. When she saw Bu Fang's hesitation, she could not help but urge him to speak.

Juan'Er was staring at Bu Fang with a face filled with expectation. She was truly fond of making egg tarts.

Bu Fang pondered for a moment while lightly drumming the table with his slender fingers. Then, he looked up at Juan'Er and asked, "Why did you make egg tarts after going back home?"

Juan'Er was stunned for a moment and then anxiously replied, "Because I like egg tarts!"

Bu Fang was slightly shocked by her blushing appearance. She did not seem to be faking her expression. She was truly captivated by egg tarts and had completely fallen in love with the dish.

Sometimes, food possessed such a charm that could completely mesmerize a person. Even though it could be their first time tasting a dish, they would still be fascinated by this peculiar charm.

Just like how Juan'Er was captivated by egg tarts.

Bu Fang lightly breathed out and placed the egg tart back on the porcelain plate.

He raised his head and looked at Juan'Er.

"My assessment of your egg tart is very simple."

Luo Sanniang and the others immediately perked their ears in curiosity.

Bu Fang gave them an indifferent glance and said, "It tastes

awful."

Dark Cuisine(黑暗料理) - It is used to describe food that looks bad. It originated from the Japanese manga, "Chūka Ichiban!", but the original meaning had nothing to do with food that tastes bad.

Chapter 163: The Second Teleportation, Illusory Spirit Swamp

"It tastes awful?!"

Juan'Er's expectant gaze immediately grew dim after hearing Bu Fang's assessment, like a crystal shattering into thousands of sparkling fragments.

Without taking her feelings into account, Bu Fang did not go easy on her in the slightest. Luo Sanniang was dumbfounded.

On the other hand, Xiao Yanyu and Xiao Xiaolong were extremely surprised. According to their understanding of Owner Bu, he should have started passionately giving a long-winded assessment on this dish. How could he have stopped after merely saying three words?

It tastes awful? It was not like they had ever heard him describe anything as delicious...

"You rascal, what do you mean by that? Juan'Er worked hard to make the egg tarts without sleeping last night. Can't you even say something nice?" Luo Sanniang furiously said in dissatisfaction.

Bu Fang expressionlessly gave the livid Luo Sanniang a glance and replied, "Why should I say something nice? Would saying something nice help her improve her culinary skill?"

Luo Sanniang's expression suddenly froze for a moment. She was unable to say anything in response. Indeed, anyone could say something nice. However, saying nice stuff would only cause others to become complacent. They would become unable to realize their own flaws and lose sight of themselves. If they could not even recognize themselves, how could they improve?

"There's nothing here for me to assess. Your egg tart just tastes awful. In other words... it's unpalatable," Bu Fang said. As he looked at her, his gaze was like a sharp spear that looked straight

into her innermost being, causing her mind to slightly tremble.

"I... I..." Juan'Er felt wronged and her eyes instantly turned red. How could she feel happy when her work was mercilessly criticized after staying up the entire night?

"Calm down, let me finish first," Bu Fang said as a smile appeared on his lips and his eyes became slightly softer.

"If you really want to make egg tarts that taste good, I'll give you two more chances to let me try your egg tarts. If you're able to obtain my approval, I'll point out the flaws in your egg tarts. Otherwise... forget about it," Bu Fang said.

Both Juan'Er and Luo Sanniang were surprised. They did not expect Bu Fang to actually say something like that. What exactly did his words mean? Was he going to give pointers to Juan'Er?

Xiao Yanyu and Xiao Xiaolong were stunned as well.

Bu Fang stood up and took a breath. He faced them and said, "Alright, today's opened hours has ended. Everyone, please leave."

Afterward, Bu Fang's gaze landed on Juan'Er once more as he said, "Remember, you only have two chances. If you're unable to fulfill my expectations... then I can only offer my apologies."

After Bu Fang finished speaking, he turned around and entered the kitchen.

The people in the store looked at each other and then started leaving one after another.

Juan'Er had yet to recover from her astonishment. Was Bu Fang telling her to make egg tarts and let him taste them? Did that mean that if her egg tarts could gain his approval, he would teach her the true method of making egg tarts?

The horrible feeling that she felt when Bu Fang criticized her egg tarts suddenly disappeared.

If she could receive pointers from Bu Fang, she was confident

that she could make delicious and adorable egg tarts.

"Thank you, Owner Bu. I'll definitely work hard to earn your approval!" Juan'Er seriously said while bowing ninety degrees.

Afterward, Juan'Er left the store while pulling along Luo Sanniang. She excitedly hurried back to the Marquis' manor and started the preparations to make egg tarts. She was determined to make egg tarts that could obtain Owner Bu's approval.

...

In the cold winter night, the pair of bright moons hanging high up in the sky were strongly radiating a cold moonlight which seemed to have draped a veil over the earth.

Bu Fang returned to his room after he finished practicing his cutting and carving techniques as well as brewed the Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine. He washed up and then leaned back on the headboard of his bed.

"The wine which I am planning to brew should use the Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit as the main ingredient while the Phoenix Blood Herb as well as other spirit herbs shall be complementary ingredients. If a portion of the Phoenix Blood Herb had not been used to cure Ji Chengxue, it would've been a pretty good main ingredient as well," Bu Fang muttered to himself.

However, other than the Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit and Phoenix Blood Herb, Bu Fang did not have any other suitable spirit herbs at the moment. Therefore, he needed to start considering the problem of obtaining other spirit herbs.

The requirements for the other spirit herbs might not need to be as strict, but... they should not be too terrible either. Afterall, Ni Yan once mentioned that the wine, Dragon's Breath, was brewed using numerous valuable spirit herbs and then left to ferment at the bottom of a spirit lake for a few years. The resulting wine was definitely exceptional.

"System, bring me somewhere where I can harvest spirit herbs. Spirit herbs are considered ingredients as well, so I should have the right to go," Bu Fang called out to the system in his mind.

The system remained silent for a long while before it solemnly said, "Does the host really wish to proceed with a teleportation and carry out the capturing and harvesting of ingredients?"

"Yes," Bu Fang seriously replied.

Then, the system became silent once more. After a long while, its voice rang out, "Setting coordinates, teleportation will be ready in approximately two hours... During this period, the host may begin preparation work."

"Two hours?" Bu Fang nodded. Two hours was not much but it was enough for him to make some preparations.

However, there was actually not much for him to prepare. He mainly needed to sleep and have a good rest. Many of the things were already inside the system's storage space.

Thus, Bu Fang went back into the kitchen and added some containers filled with seasoning into the system's storage space before returning to his room. He climbed onto his bed and fell asleep.

With this slumber, he slept for two entire hours.

Only when the system's voice started resounding in his mind, did Bu Fang open his eyes. A tiny white dot of light was hovering above his head. It was rapidly flying around, drawing a mysterious teleportation array.

As someone who experienced teleportation once before, Bu Fang appeared unhurried and relaxed. He leisurely put on his clothes and tied up his hair with a woolen rope. When he finished washing up, the drawing of the teleportation array was just about to finish.

Finally, after a few more breaths, the teleportation array was completely drawn. It was emanating a strange light that

illuminated Bu Fang's entire body.

A violent wind suddenly started blowing and engulfed everything in the room.

Bu Fang's figure standing within the gale was soon enveloped and disappeared without a trace.

...

The Illusory Spirit Swamp was a boundless and vast region that was located north of the Wildlands and the Light Wind Empire.

Within the Hidden Dragon Continent, there were four great dangerous locations: Wildlands, Illusory Spirit Marsh, Hundred Thousand Great Rivers, and Wuliang Mountain...

The Illusory Spirit Swamp was a dangerous location that was as equally famous as the Wildlands and innumerable spirit beasts were inhabiting there as well. However, the spirit beasts were different from the ones in the Wildlands. Many of them dwell beneath the swamps and respired the spirit energy within the swamp to strengthen themselves and continuously increase their cultivation.

Even though the Illusory Spirit Swamps was a dangerous location, there was an abundant amount of spirit energy and water in the area. Since it was a much better environment for spirit herbs to grow compared to the Wildlands, high grade spirit herbs were far more common there. Within the Hidden Dragon Continent, many adventurers would choose to explore the Illusory Spirit Swamp. If they could chance upon a sixth grade spirit herb... they would have struck gold.

With profit as the driving force, many people would naturally head there in droves.

No matter which of the dangerous locations, the situation was the same.

Within the peaceful Illusory Spirit Swamp, a white dot of light

suddenly appeared and then rapidly flew around in the sky. In a short while, a mysterious teleportation array was drawn in the air.

A violent wind suddenly came whistling from the teleportation array and caused the swamp water to swirl into the air.

The peacefulness of the swamp was instantly broken. The birds nearby were startled, causing them to flap their wings and fly away.

When the violent wind dissipated, the swamp water instantly spilled back onto the ground.

A slender figure appeared after the violent wind completely died out.

Chapter 164: The Serpent-Men Tribe in the Illusory Spirit Swamp

Within the boundless Illusory Spirit Swamp that glittered with gorgeous colors under the glare of the sunlight, a flock of birds were taking flight after getting startled by a barrage of noises.

Bu Fang raised his eyebrows as he stepped onto the mushy ground.

"Where am I?" Bu Fang's expression slightly darkened when he realized he was not in the Wildlands where he previously went but in an unfamiliar location. At a glance, there were bodies of water and vegetation everywhere.

As Bu Fang took a step forward, the squishy ground made him feel rather uneasy. Judging from the terrain, he should be in a swamp. With the bodies of water and vegetation everywhere, there was not even the slightest resemblance between this place and the Wildlands...

Where exactly... did the system dump him?!

How could any spirit herbs of worth be found in such a place? Could there be a bug in the system? As a result, he might have been accidentally sent to the wrong place.

After covering the soles of his feet with true energy, Bu Fang felt he could safely roam within the swamp. He was completely surrounded by wetland and the terrain was extremely muddy. Bu Fang was sure that without the aid of true energy, he would definitely be engulfed by the swamp within a few steps.

A fifth grade Battle-King possessed a large amount of true energy and walking on the surface of water by covering the soles of his feet with true energy was not an especially difficult technique. Basically, any Battle-King was capable of doing so. In the first place, Bu Fang's ability to control true energy was much stronger

than the average Battle-King. So, it was not surprising that he could do so as well.

The splashing noises produced as his feet made contact with the water's surface travelled far within this large and open area.

The strange noises that were constantly coming from the swamp around him caused a frown to appear on his face and put him on alert.

"I should quickly find the spirit herb and return as soon as possible... This environment is really making me feel uncomfortable," Bu Fang muttered to himself as he continued moving forward.

As one of the four great dangerous locations in the Hidden Dragon Continent, how could there not be any spirit herbs growing in the Illusory Spirit Swamp? As Bu Fang moved forward by himself, his eyes were constantly scanning his surroundings in hope of catching a glimpse of a spirit herb.

Suddenly, as Bu Fang took a step forward, bubbles started appearing on the surface of the water. Bu Fang calmly watched as something burst out from the water and splattered muddy water everywhere.

The creature was an extremely ugly spirit beast. It was not very big but its sudden appearance still caused a slight frown to appear on Bu Fang's face.

The body of the toad-like creature was covered with a layer of black mud that gave off a revolting smell. It was staring straight at Bu Fang with its vocal sacs puffed up.

"This should be a third grade spirit beast, judging from the weak intensity of spirit energy emanating from its body," Bu Fang muttered as he gave the creature an indifferent glance. The current him was completely unconcerned with the likes of a third grade spirit beast.

Even though he was inept in combat, dealing with a third grade spirit beast was still quite easy for him.

Bu Fang flicked his finger and an energy bullet filled with true energy instantly flew toward the toad. The toad made an odd noise and spat out putrid sludge from its mouth at Bu Fang's energy bullet.

It was an easy matter for a fifth grade Battle-King to deal with a third grade spirit beast. Even if Bu Fang was inept in combat, the difference in their cultivation level was unchangeable. He could deal with the creature by purely relying on his true energy.

Bang! The energy bullet pierced through one of the toad's legs. The creature shrieked in pain and then dived back into the swamp. It splattered the putrid mud everywhere and disappeared in an instant.

Bu Fang did not give chase. Or to be more exact, he could not be bothered to. He was completely uninterested in using this toad-like spirit beast as an ingredient.

Therefore, Bu Fang no longer paid any heed to the creature and continued moving forward while stepping on the surface of the water.

...

The serpent-men tribes were the most commonly seen tribes within the Illusory Spirit Swamp. There were similarities between them and humans but there were also many differences as well.

Firstly, the method of reproduction for the serpent-men was different from humans. Humans reproduced through live birth while the serpent-men reproduced through laying egg, which might be due to having a serpentine lower body.

There were quite a lot of strong warriors within the serpent-men tribes. Every one of them was a natural born warrior because the Illusory Spirit Swamp itself was a place where only the fittest

survived. Here, those who were weak would only get devoured by the spirit beasts hiding in the swamp.

The serpent-men had their own ruler just like humans. Even though their society only consisted of tribes, the entire race was unified under their sovereign. Within the Illusory Spirit Swamp, there were serpent-men tribes of various sizes everywhere. In each serpent-men tribe, there was an elder who could use magic arrays to communicate with their sovereign.

Within one of the serpent-men tribes, the members of the tribe were peacefully living their everyday lives while swaying their brightly colored serpentine tails.

Like humans, they had social interactions and houses. Even though the sort of housing built in wetlands was crude, it was still their home and possessed an indescribable meaning for the serpent-men.

A scrawny, elderly serpent-man baring his upper body was slithering over the wetlands while swaying his serpentine tail. He was speaking to a muscular, young serpent-man in a distance. "Ah Ni! Send some of the stronger guards to watch over the medicinal herb farm. It's almost time for harvesting, we can't let anything untoward occur. Last year, our tribe was criticized by our sovereign, so we must do a good job this year."

The serpent-man called Ah Ni immediately broke into a grin, revealing his razor sharp teeth. "Yes, I'll go right away! Elder, don't worry. The harvest is definitely going to be bountiful this year. Many of the spirit herbs are ready to be harvested, especially that Ice Soul Monarch Lotus is just about to bloom. When the time comes, we'll definitely earn our sovereign's praise if we offer up the harvest along with the lotus!"

The elderly serpent-man rolled his eyes at the robust serpent-man and said in exasperation, "Don't be careless, pay close attention and make sure nothing bad happens... Oh, that's right.

That bunch of crafty humans from the White Cloud Villa will definitely find out that the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus is about to bloom. You must watch out for them."

"If any of those crafty humans dare to appear in front of me, I'll definitely tear them into pieces!" Ah Ni's eyes revealed a hint of malice. As he clenched his fists, the muscles on his body slightly bulged and true energy overflowed from him. The intensity of true energy emanating from him was actually comparable to an ordinary sixth grade Battle-Emperor.

The elderly serpent-man smiled and shook his head. After bidding farewell with the elder, Ah Ni slithered toward their medicinal farm while leading a few other young serpent-men.

...

Splash!

A small boat made from unknown materials was swiftly gliding across the vast Illusory Spirit Swamp. There was a brightly flashing magic array carved on the stern of the boat. The magic array was providing a powerful driving force that propelled the small boat forward.

The boat made travelling within the swamp extremely fast and convenient.

A white cloud symbol was etched on the side of the spirit boat. The white cloud appeared realistic, as if it was going to come to life.

Three figures were sitting cross-legged in the spirit boat. The auras emanating from them were very strong and caused the grass around them to buckle under the pressure.

Suddenly, the young man with fair complexion sitting in the middle slightly opened his eyes. He was very good looking and the rosiness in his fair skin made him look extremely alluring.

The young man's forehead was covered with a layer of bangs that

was fluttering in the wind.

"Young lady... Erm, young master, we're just about to reach a serpent-men tribe. The Ice Soul Monarch Lotus that you're looking for is in the tribe's medicinal herb farm," the man sitting in front of the young man said as he turned his head and looked at the young man.

The young man opened his eyes and a faint smile appeared on his lips as he looked toward the barely visible crude buildings in the distance.

"Let's stop somewhere near the tribe and find out more about their medicinal herb farm."

Chapter 165: The Serpent-Men's Medicinal Herb Farm

"Elder brother Ah Ni!"

"Elder brother Ah Ni, good day! Are you here to check on the herb farm?"

"Elder brother Ah Ni's cultivation is getting stronger and stronger! His true energy level is really impressive!"

...

With his chest held high, Ah Ni slithered over the moist ground of the swamp. His upper body was bare, exposing his powerful muscles as well as strange markings which made him appear slightly fiercer.

As Ah Ni moved along, the serpent-men nearby respectfully greeted him. Some of them had respectful expressions on their faces while others looked at him with envy in their eyes. Ah Ni was not the person with the highest cultivation in the serpent-men tribe but he was viewed by the tribe leader and the elder as the most promising tribesman because of his youth.

As a sixth grade Battle-Emperor, Ah Ni frequently went hunting for fifth grade Spirit Tail Crocodiles and could tear them into pieces with his bare hands, which was an incredible feat for a serpent-man.

Since the serpent-men were capable of forming societies within the perilous Illusory Spirit Swamp despite the constant threat from the countless amount of powerful spirit beasts roaming about, they naturally had their own rules of survival.

In order for the serpent-men to safely survive in such a hostile environment, they must first deal with the spirit beasts. Therefore, the serpent-men used the capability of slaying Spirit Tail Crocodiles, which were the greatest threat to them, as the

benchmark for determining the strong among them.

Those capable of slaying the Spirit Tail Crocodiles were the true warriors of the serpent-men.

Ah Ni's tribe was considered small among the serpent-men but its population was surprisingly large. Compared with humans, the amount was comparable to a small town.

Even though their dwellings were crudely made, they were still buildings. With rows upon rows of buildings, it gave off the feeling of a small town.

Ah Ni had once heard from the elder that a large city built by the serpent-men existed somewhere within the Illusory Spirit Swamp. The neatly ordered buildings in the city were extremely magnificent and even comparable to cities built by humans. The serpent-men residing in the city were able to live happy lives under the reign of the Serpentine Sovereign.

In that place, there were neither Spirit Tail Crocodiles nor other terrifying spirit beasts to constantly threaten their lives. There, their offsprings could lead stable lives from the moment they hatched from their eggs and grow up without a care in the world... That was the sort of world that Ah Ni and the other tribe members all longed for.

Slap! Ah Ni struck the ground with his tail and caused the icy water to splash everywhere.

A pair of serpent-men warriors armed with spears immediately bowed toward Ah Ni in a respectful manner.

These two serpent-men warriors were standing guard in front of an area surrounded by a crude bamboo fence. This was the most important area within the tribe, the medicinal herb farm. There were many valuable spirit herbs growing in here. Even though most of them were only third or fourth grade, there were some fifth and sixth grade spirit herbs. There was even a seventh grade

Ice Soul Monarch Lotus that was about to bloom.

"Good work, don't let your guard down. Make sure to pay attention to any signs of trouble near the herb farm. Those crafty humans have dog-like noses. Once the spirit herbs are ready to be harvested, they will definitely come running after the smell. We must definitely not let those damned humans profit from our hard work," Ah Ni said while patting a guard's shoulder.

That serpent-men warrior immediately puffed out his chest and solemnly nodded.

The corners of Ah Ni's lips curled into a smile. He then slithered past the guards into the herb farm.

When Ah Ni entered the herb farm, his nose was immediately assailed by the rich herbal fragrance in the air and he was mesmerized with the strong scent.

"Ah Ni, why are you back here again?"

While Ah Ni was taking in a deep breath and revelling in the herbal fragrance, a bewitching voice suddenly reached his ears. A group of serpent-women was slithering out from the inner parts of the herb farm.

These serpent-women had serpentine lower bodies just like Ah Ni but their upper bodies were just like any human woman. Their well developed chests were wrapped in linen cloth which they obtained from trading with the humans.

The leader of the group was an extremely beautiful serpent-woman. Her face appeared to have been meticulously sculpted by the heavens themselves and her voluptuous figure was unmatched among the serpent-women.

"Yu Fu, you're really getting more and more beautiful! One day, you'll definitely become my wife!" Ah Ni said as he looked at the serpent-women leading the group with a mesmerized expression.

A slight frown immediately appeared on Yu Fu's face as she

coldly looked at Ah Ni and asked, "Why are you here today? The herb farm has always been our responsibility. Are you questioning our ability to perform well?"

Ah Ni licked his lips and said with a smile, "Yu Fu, please don't misunderstand, you have my utmost trust. It's just that since the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus is close to blooming, the elder wanted me to be here to prevent those crafty humans from stealing the herb."

Yu Fu's complexion immediately became much better after hearing his reply. She nodded and said, "In that case, come with me."

Then, the group of serpent-women went ahead and led the way. Ah Ni, who was watching Yu Fu with a mesmerized expression, hurriedly wiped away the saliva running down from the corner of his mouth and followed after them.

...

"Hmm... It's only a third grade spirit herb, too bad."

With an abundant amount of true energy gathered on his soles, Bu Fang squatted down and plucked a blade of aquamarine leaf sticking out from the soil. The long and thin leaf had a single black vein running across its surface.

Bu Fang had already been wandering about in the vast Illusory Spirit Swamp for over half a day. During this time, he found many spirit herbs but they were basically only second or third grade. Once in a while, he would find fourth grade spirit herbs as well, but fourth grade spirit herbs were still worthless in Bu Fang's eyes.

He needed a spirit herb that could be mixed together with the Phoenix Blood Herb as well as the Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit to brew wine. Fourth grade spirit herbs... were insufficient.

As the bottom of his feet was covered with true energy, Bu Fang appeared to be hovering above the water. However, he would still

produce noise as he walked on the water's surface.

After walking for a while, Bu Fang found another fourth grade spirit herb along the way. With a better than nothing attitude, Bu Fang killed the snake-like spirit beast that was guarding the spirit herb before storing it in the system's storage space.

"Hmm? What's that?" After walking for a while more, Bu Fang puzzledly looked toward a large mass of shadow in the distance, which appeared to be buildings.

"There's actually buildings here? Did someone really set up a village on this mushy swamp?" Bu Fang was extremely surprised. Logically speaking, the soft ground of the swamp was completely unsuitable for constructing buildings.

Even though Bu Fang was somewhat perplexed, he was still feeling quite pleased. At least... it was a sign of human presence.

Therefore, Bu Fang increased his pace and headed in the direction of the buildings.

As Bu Fang gradually moved toward those buildings, something rapidly approached from a distance and went past him, causing water to splash toward him. Fortunately, Bu Fang's cultivation level was not weak. With a true energy barrier, he managed to keep himself from getting drenched.

Bu Fang expressionlessly gave the wooden boat that sped past him a glance and pursed his lips.

As he had expected... There were people living here and it was suddenly becoming lively.

"That boat-like thing seem to be rather convenient for travelling within the swamp," Bu Fang thought.

...

The spirit boat came to a halt and three figures stepped off the boat. The soles of their feet were also covered with true energy,

allowing them to firmly stand on the wetland.

With a wave of his hand, the spirit boat was put away by the young man with a fair complexion standing in the middle.

"Young master Wu... Wasn't there someone standing there just now?" One of the man could not help but ask as he recalled the scenery as the spirit boat sped past. He seemed to have caught a glimpse of a human figure back there.

The woman who was being called young master Wu... Oh, the woman who was currently disguised as a man indifferently gave the man a glance and said, "Who cares if there was someone there or not? Our objective is the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus. As long as he doesn't interfere in our business, it has nothing to do with us. After all, this isn't our White Cloud Villa, we're in the territory of the serpent-men."

That subordinate nodded with a grave expression. The serpent-men tribe was not to be underestimated. He did not dare to be careless either, especially with the young master around. The young master's identity was special. His job was to ensure that she did not suffer even the slightest injury.

"Let's go, our target destination is the rear area of the serpent-men tribe. That should be the location of their medicinal herb farm. We'll look for an opportunity to sneak in," young master Wu said while revealing a hint of excitement on her face.

That subordinate immediately forced a wry smile and could only nod in response.

Leaving behind one person as a lookout, young master Wu and the other subordinate headed in the direction of the rather dilapidated fence in the distance.

That was the direction of the serpent-men tribe's herb farm.

Chapter 166: Just Exactly Who Is Sabotaging Us?

The serpent-men tribe's medicinal herb farm was enormous. Even though its perimeter was surrounded by a simple bamboo fencing, the interior was filled with the characteristics of an herb farm.

Ah Ni was following after Yu Fu and the other serpent-women. As he observed the spirit herbs around him which were continuously emanating rich amounts of spirit energy, his eyes were filled with amazement.

These spirit herbs were planted within their respectively assigned areas and the types of spirit herbs planted in each area were determined through strict planning. Therefore, he felt that everything within the herb farm was orderly arranged.

Yu Fu and the other serpent-women were members of the tribe who were specially assigned to cultivate spirit herbs. They developed their familiarity and understanding with spirit herbs through the teachings of the older generation and took over the responsibility of cultivating the spirit herbs.

"The Ice Soul Monarch Lotus is a very valuable seventh grade spirit herb. Nearly every part of the herb is usable and filled with terrifying amounts of spirit energy, and its seeds are especially valuable. Moreover, its taste and texture are extremely good. It's not just a medicinal herb but also an excellent ingredient," Yu Fu explained as she slithered ahead while swaying her serpentine lower body.

Yu Fu's master had once told her that seventh grade spirit herbs like the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus were not only extraordinarily valuable for their medicinal value but also their usability.

"However, the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus is so precious. How could

anyone easily use it as an ingredient? Isn't that a waste?" Ah Ni subconsciously said. From his point of view, some things were meant to be eaten but there were some things that would be wasted if eaten.

As the group proceeded through the herb farm, they soon arrived at the central area. This was the center of the herb farm where many valuable fifth and sixth grade spirit herbs were planted and being cultivated.

Even without including the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus, the spirit herbs here were extremely valuable.

"That's the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus. Right now, it's still in an unripe state. When the herb has completely ripened, the flower bud will completely spread open. I've never seen the blooming of an Ice Soul Monarch Lotus either, so I have no idea how beautiful it is when it's in full bloom," Yu Fu said.

A distance away, there was a small pond encircled with bamboo fencing. The water of the pond was clear and transparent. There was not even the slightest algae floating in the water and it was even emanating a faint fragrance.

A delicate, pale blue closed lotus bud was floating on the surface of the pond with a few pieces of lotus leaves around it. When viewing from a distance, the lotus bud seemed to be hidden behind a layer of blurry fog and the markings on its surface were barely discernible.

The lotus leaves were deep green in color, appearing darker due to the complicated and mysterious markings on its surface.

Ah Ni stood next to the pond and took a deep breath. As he felt the abundant amount of spirit energy flowing into his nostrils, he could not help but exclaim in astonishment. "How beautiful... So, this is the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus?"

"That's natural, since there's no one who can resist the beauty of

the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus. It's even more beautiful when it's in full bloom. Unfortunately, the blooming of the Monarch Lotus only lasts for a short moment. According to my master, it only lasts for a few breaths." A hint of yearning and pity appeared on Yu Fu's exquisite face.

The corners of Ah Ni's mouth curled up as he scanned his surroundings and said with a smile, "There should still be half a day before the Monarch Lotus fully blooms. When the time comes, humans might appear. We have to protect the Monarch Lotus well."

Yu Fu gave Ah Ni a glance and replied, "Of course, we've waited so long for the Monarch Lotus to bloom. How could we allow those humans to easily snatch it away? Moreover... when the Monarch Lotus blooms, its intense spirit energy will definitely attract the spirit beasts in the surroundings. During that time, powerful spirit beasts might appear too. You must watch out for them as well."

"There's nothing to be afraid of. With me around, there's no problem at all!" Ah Ni patted his chest with confidence.

...

Young master Wu and her subordinates easily got over the bamboo fencing. The defense fortifications built by the serpent-men tribe were basically equivalent to nothing. A mere bamboo fencing was simply not going to stop anyone.

"Hmm? It appears this serpent-men still have some tricks up their sleeves. There's a magic array drawn in each of these fields. If someone attempts to steal any of these herbs, the magic arrays would activate and the serpent-men warriors would be alerted. No wonder they've only set up a bamboo fencing," young master Wu muttered to herself while knitting her good-looking eyebrows together.

Since she had already discovered the serpent-men's traps, she could not be bothered to look at those low grade spirit herbs any

more. In her eyes, these spirit herbs were not really that valuable.

After all, there were already innumerable amounts of fourth and fifth grade spirit herbs in the White Cloud Villa. Their medicinal herb farm was several times larger than the serpent-men tribe's. If it was not for the seventh grade Ice Soul Monarch Lotus, she would not even bother to come here.

"Young master, there's a large amount of spirit energy coming from the field up ahead. Let's head in that direction," her subordinate said after sensing the spirit energy in the air.

Young master Wu nodded and reminded her subordinate to be more careful. After all, they were currently trespassing. With the animosity between serpent-men and humans, there would certainly be some trouble if they were discovered.

If that really happened, it would become even harder for them to obtain the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus.

Therefore, the two of them suppressed their aura and slowly headed in the direction of the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus.

...

Bu Fang had been walking for a long while. Even though the group of buildings appeared close at hand, he still had to travel for quite a distance before reaching the perimeter of the herb farm.

"A fence? That's a bit funny." A smile appeared on Bu Fang's lips as he vaulted over the bamboo fencing.

The softness of the soil in the herb farm was much firmer compared to the swamp outside. Even though it was still softer than normal soil, it was at least not the sort of terrifying mud that would cause someone to sink after stepping into it.

Well-ordered fields were scattered throughout the herb farm. With a single glance, Bu Fang's field of vision was filled with a sea of spirit herbs. There were some really valuable spirit herbs here but the others were comparatively ordinary.

After giving his surroundings a quick glance, a trace of joy appeared in Bu Fang's eyes. He did not think that there was actually man-made herb fields here. It was truly a pleasant surprise.

It was already a miracle to encounter a village within the sparsely populated Illusory Spirit Swamp. He did not anticipate that the village would actually have their own herb fields.

"This is a rather valuable fifth grade spirit herb! It's actually just left here like this?" Bu Fang puzzledly looked at a spirit herb that appeared to be a butterfly suspended in place. His eyes narrowed as he squatted in front of the spirit herb.

Spirit energy was steadily hovering above the spirit herb and releasing a faint fragrance in the air.

"Not bad, it wouldn't be a bad idea to use this as a supplementary ingredient for the wine." Bu Fang's eyes lit up as a smile appeared on his lips.

...

Young master Wu was fully suppressing the aura emanating from her body and her subordinate was doing the same thing as well. This was one of the White Cloud Villa's secret techniques, the Turtle Breathing Technique, which allowed its user to conceal their aura and cultivation level. It was a rather useful technique.

"I can already sense the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus in the distance. However, there's a lot of people around that area. We have to be careful not to be discovered... There's still some time before the Monarch Lotus bloom, we'll make our move once it happens," young master Wu said.

Her subordinate solemnly nodded in response. The two of them hid themselves in an herb field and gazed toward the pond where the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus was located in the distance.

"Is that the Monarch Lotus?! As expected... What an astonishing

amount of spirit energy!" her subordinate exclaimed in astonishment.

"Stop talking and just wait. You're going to alert them of our presence," young master Wu whispered while fiercely glaring at her subordinate.

The subordinate's expression stiffened for a moment before he hurriedly nodded.

Suddenly, a great change abruptly occurred in the serene herb farm. When young master Wu noticed that the magic array underneath her feet started activating on its own and was sealing off the herb field like a cage, she quickly backed away.

"What's going on? Why did the magic array activate?" Young master Wu was extremely flustered.

"Who's there?!"

"Who dares to intrude upon our tribe's herb farm!"

"How audacious! Get out here right now!"

Ah Ni, who was relishing in the beauty of the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus, suddenly opened his eyes and let out an angry roar. As true energy gushed out from his body, his eyes swiftly locked onto the place where young master Wu and her subordinate were hiding.

He sensed a spirit energy fluctuation appearing in that area just now. Without a doubt, someone was hiding there!

This immediately caused Ah Ni to bristle with rage. "These damned humans... They actually dared to intrude into our herb farm! This is simply unforgivable!"

Meanwhile, young master Wu was even more exasperated and her pretty face was contorted in fury.

"Damn it... Just exactly who sabotaged us?!"

Chapter 167: Eh? Mermaids?

Wu Yunbai, the young master of the White Cloud Villa, exhibited an astonishing talent for cultivation ever since a young age and was thus heavily nurtured by the master of the White Cloud Villa. At present, she was already a sixth grade Battle-Emperor and was only a step away from becoming a seventh grade Battle-Saint.

She was hailed as the most talented within the younger generation. If it was not for her identity as a woman, she might have already been chosen as the successor to the master of the White Cloud Villa.

The White Cloud Villa was an extremely powerful faction within the Illusory Spirit Swamp. It was not a sect but was far more dreadful than any sect. Among the sects, the Celestial Arcanum Sect might be the only one who could contend against them. Furthermore, the master of the White Cloud Villa himself was a person with a formidable level of cultivation.

At the moment, Wu Yunbai's expression was grim. All of the magic arrays in the herb farm were activated and each of the herb fields was enveloped by a mysterious magic array. It became impossible for them to steal the herb without alerting the serpent-men.

In addition, Ah Ni, Yu Fu, and the other warriors of the serpent-men tribe had discovered the location of Wu Yunbai and her subordinate, and were currently rushing toward them.

Dreadful amounts of true energy were emanating from the serpent-men, especially Ah Ni who was exuding a malicious aura just like a savage monster. His eyes were extremely menacing and veins were bulging all over the muscles on his upper body.

When Wu Yunbai's subordinate realized that their presence was already discovered, he let out a furious roar. The hair all over his body were standing on their ends and his eyes were wide like

bronze bells. As he pushed his palm forward, a torrent of clouds suddenly gathered around him and then surged forward toward the serpent-men.

"Cloud Expelling Palm!"

Ah Ni's eyes turned cold and a smile appeared on his lips, revealing his razor-sharp teeth. The malice in his eyes became even more intense.

"As expected, the two of you are from the White Cloud Villa. Are you here for the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus? I won't allow you to succeed!" Ah Ni started sneering as he placed his hands together and gathered true energy into his hands. Suddenly, he pulled his hands apart and a pitch-black spear appeared in between them.

At that moment, Wu Yunbai had also regained her composure. Her fair face was calm and serene as she gave the serpent-men a glance and said with a frown, "Don't kill them, just immobilize them. After all, we're just here for the spirit herb."

Her subordinate, who was much more serious than before, gave her a profound smile and replied, "Don't worry, miss, I know what to do."

Wu Yunbai immediately glared at him. "What did you just call me? Either call me young master Wu or just young master!"

That subordinate coughed in embarrassment and then turned to face the serpent-men with a grin. The aura emanating from his body suddenly surged and a dreadful, mountain-like pressure came crashing down upon the serpent-men, causing all of their expressions to change.

"A seventh grade Battle-Saint! Oh no!" Ah Ni's expression slightly changed. He did not think that the person in front of his eyes was actually a seventh grade Battle-Saint. The likes of Battle-Saints held prominent positions even within the White Cloud Villa, so how could such a personage serve as a subordinate of this pretty

boy? Could it be... there was something special about the identity of this pretty boy?

Ah Ni was not a fool. When he realized his opponent was a seventh grade Battle-Saint, various thoughts rushed through his head and he immediately came up with his own speculations about Wu Yunbai's identity.

However, his current situation prevented him from pondering any further. Dealing with the might of a seventh grade Battle-Saint was already beyond his capability. Even though the difference between a sixth and seventh grade was only a single grade on the surface, the actual difference between the two was basically insurmountable.

However, Ah Ni was not too worried either. Even though his opponent was a Battle-Saint, the elder watching over the herb farm was a seventh grade Battle-Saint as well.

Sure enough, while Ah Ni was still preoccupied with his own thoughts, the aura of a serpent-men Battle-Saint appeared from behind him.

...

A smile appeared on Bu Fang's lips as he looked at the spirit herb protected behind a magic array. Like he expected, no one could feel at ease about leaving spirit herbs in such a basic herb farm without having security precautions. Judging from its complex appearance, the magic array was clearly unusual.

As Bu Fang reached out a finger and touched the magic array, he narrowed his eyes from the numb feeling coursing through his body.

He then stood up and looked around his surroundings. He noticed that the magic arrays in the other herb field were activated as well and realized he might have accidentally done an incredible deed.

"Hmm? The aura of a seventh grade Battle-Saint?" Bu Fang suddenly felt a wave of dreadful aura coming from a distance. He was not a stranger to the pressure mixed within the aura.

Bu Fang had personally met a few Battle-Saints like Xiao Meng and Zhao Musheng, so he was quite familiar with the feeling of their true energy. However, he did not expect to witness a clash between Battle-Saints in such a basic herb farm.

"There are seventh grade Battle-Saints in such a rural place too?" Bu Fang thought in amusement.

Bu Fang gave the spirit herb protected behind the magic array another glance before he continued moving forward. It was impossible for two Battle-Saints to fight each other for no reason, so something good must have brought about the battle. Within this herb farm, the only thing that two Battle-Saints would fight over was most likely some high grade spirit herb.

Just the thought of spirit herbs was enough to energize Bu Fang. The objective of this trip was precisely for the sake of acquiring spirit herbs...

After continuing ahead and turning a few corners, Bu Fang was suddenly surprised for a moment when he saw several figures heading toward him from a distance.

"Eh? Mermaids?" Bu Fang muttered in astonishment. However, after getting a closer look, he realized those figures were not the legendary mermaids... Their upper bodies were just like humans but they had serpentine lower bodies that were densely covered with scales.

"Serpent-men!" Bu Fang exclaimed in astonishment. This was his first time witnessing strange races from another world, so there was actually an inexplicable agitation in his heart.

The group of serpent-men who were armed with spears were hurriedly rushing toward the location of the battle between the

Battle-Saints. When Bu Fang spotted them, they also spotted Bu Fang.

"Who's there?!" one of the serpent-men warriors angrily shouted while brandishing the spear in his hand.

Bu Fang was surprised for a moment by the fact that the serpent-men were not as friendly as expected.

"I..." Bu Fang wanted to say something but he was not given the chance. That serpent-man immediately thrust his spear at him.

"It's a human who has trespassed upon our tribe's herb farm, kill him without any quarter!"

As he felt the dreadful aura emanating from the spear, the corners of Bu Fang's lips twitched. He thought, "What do you mean by trespass... Who exactly are you attempting to stop with that fencing of yours?"

That bamboo fencing was extremely worn out and some parts had even fallen apart. Forget stopping anyone, it might not even manage to prevent some of the smaller spirit beasts from entering.

Back then, Bu Fang calmly entered just by stepping over the fencing...

However, these serpent-men were uninterested in Bu Fang's thoughts. They enveloped their spears with true energy and started attacking Bu Fang.

The cultivation levels of these serpent-men were not low. They were all fourth grade Battle-Spirits, which was more than enough for the guards of a medicinal herb farm.

However, Bu Fang was at the very least a man who could be called a Battle-King. Why would he be afraid of these little serpent-men? Even though he was inept in combat... his cultivation level was still the real deal.

Bu Fang stood in place with a sharp gaze as true energy burst out

from his body with a loud noise. The piece of woolen rope used to secure his hair fell apart as well.

The serpent-man who first thrust his spear was shocked by the sudden development and his expression became extremely grave. A fifth grade Battle-King?!

Those serpent-men immediately stopped advancing. They were only fourth grade Battle-Spirits but the human in front of them was a fifth grade Battle-King. Perhaps their lives would all end here...

The serpent-man craned his neck and shouted while putting up a brave front, "You damnable humans! Are you here to steal our spirit herbs? You'll have to step over my dead body first!"

Contrary to his expectation, Bu Fang slowly suppressed the true energy emanating from his body. With his hands held behind his back and an unfathomable expression on his face, he looked at these serpent-men and let out a snort.

"Why should I step over your dead body just because you're telling me to? Wouldn't that make me lose face?" Bu Fang replied.

The expressions of those serpent-men immediately stiffened... and then they looked at each other in confusion.

...

Dozens of miles away from the serpent-men tribe, the surface of the water suddenly started bubbling. Then, something large emerged from the water and swiftly headed in the direction of the serpent-men tribe.

Plop, plop!

Somewhere within the swamp, a large pack of toad-like spirit beasts were swiftly leaping in the direction of the serpent-men tribe.

Nearby, there were many other spirit beasts that were bizarre-

looking but emanating powerful auras slowly moving along as well.

Suddenly, a large herd of spirit beasts had gathered around the serpent-men tribe without anyone realizing.

Chapter 168: The Scary Human Armed with a Kitchen Knife

"Miss, hurry up and go, I'll hold that serpent-men elder back."

Wu Yunbai's subordinate was releasing an intense amount of true energy from his entire body as he blocked the attack from an elderly serpent-man who was swinging his tail around like a weapon. The aura of this elderly serpent-man was very powerful, since he was a seventh grade Battle-Saint after all.

The two of them rose into the sky and started fighting in the air. The Ice Soul Monarch Lotus was not that far away and they did not want to accidentally damage the Monarch Lotus during their fight. That was a result that neither side wanted. Therefore, the both of them reached an unspoken agreement and continued their battle in the sky.

Wu Yunbai calmly gave the battle in the air a glance and then leisurely started retreating while holding her hands behind her back.

"Human, where do you think you're going!" Ah Ni angrily shouted. With a roar, his spear came whistling through the air at Wu Yunbai.

With a frown on her face, Wu Yunbai raised her slender hand and threw out a palm strike. A massive cloud of fog suddenly appeared and spread everywhere, as if a curtain was draped over the land.

When Ah Ni rushed out of the hazy fog, Wu Yunbai's figure was already long gone. He let out an infuriated roar and slammed the ground with his tail in frustration. Then, he swiftly slithered away while heading in an outward direction to chase after Wu Yunbai.

With her hands held behind her back, Wu Yunbai was lightly tapping the ground with her toes and covering a large distance

with every step. Suddenly, her figure slightly trembled before coming to a stop and she looked somewhere in the distance in puzzlement.

There, a young man with a slender figure was holding... Hmm? A kitchen knife?

Wu Yunbai's expression immediately became extremely odd. Why was there a human holding a kitchen knife in the serpent-men tribe's medicinal herb farm? Furthermore, right in front of that person... three serpent-men were prostrating themselves before him.

At that moment, the three serpent-men prostrating on the ground had already lost their arrogance from before. The only thing remaining in their hearts was pure terror. Everything was not because of anything else but because of that damnable kitchen knife in that damnable human's hand.

The moment when the kitchen knife appeared, they felt a throbbing feeling that seemed to have originated from the depths of their bloodline and the flow of true energy within their bodies came to a complete standstill.

Was this thing really a kitchen knife? Who exactly was this person standing in front of their eyes?

At that moment, the serpent-men were on the verge of bursting into tears. In the first place, they were already weaker than this human. Then, this human took out a kitchen knife that could suppress them... How were they going to put up a fight in such a state?

A smile appeared on Bu Fang's lips as he gave the three serpent-men prostrating on the ground an indifferent glance. Even though the serpent-men were half-human and half-snake, they still possessed the bloodline of snakes. Snakes had a messy relationship with dragons while the Golden Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife contained the dreadful aura of a dragon. Therefore, it was no

surprise that the kitchen knife had a suppression effect on the serpent-men.

After twirling the knife around in his hand, Bu Fang stopped paying any attention to these three serpent-men and slowly walked away from them.

Just then, Wu Yunbai walked out of the fog with her hands behind her back and the two of them crossed paths.

Wu Yunbai's gaze landed on Bu Fang. As she sized up this slender young man, a hint of suspicion appeared in her eyes. This young man was only a fifth grade Battle-King, where did he find the courage to enter the serpent-men tribe's herb farm on his own?

Even though this tribe was only a subsidiary tribe among the serpent-men, there were still many powerful serpent-men warriors garrisoned here. A fifth grade Battle-King... was simply weak to the point of being laughable.

While Wu Yunbai was sizing up Bu Fang, Bu Fang was doing the same to her as well. He was sizing up the pretty boy in front of his eyes.

Bu Fang remembered clearly that the pretty boy in front of him was one of the members aboard the little boat that sailed past him earlier on. It turned out that the other party's objective was this herb farm as well.

"Who are you? Don't you know that this place is dangerous?" Wu Yunbai said. The tone of her voice was cold and lacked the gentleness of ordinary girls.

"You should hurry up and leave, there're seventh grade Battle-Saints fighting in there. If you go in any further, you might get caught up in their battle."

Wu Yunbai did not say too much to Bu Fang. She only gave him a friendly warning and walked right past him.

Suddenly, just when Bu Fang's face was still filled with

bewilderment and his eyes were still focused on her, a figure charged out from the depths of the herb farm along with a dreadful wave of aura.

A spear was sent stabbing in Wu Yunbai's direction.

Bu Fang, who was standing blankly between them, was naturally the one who bore the brunt of the attack.

"There's another human?! You audacious humans, do you really think our tribe's herb farm is the White Cloud Villa's back garden?! Die!" Ah Ni was immediately enraged when he spotted Bu Fang. He let out a roar as he thrust his spear straight at Bu Fang.

Wu Yunbai immediately stopped walking and silently swore. This young man might get instantly stabbed to death since he was standing right in front of her!

Killing a Battle-King who used a kitchen knife as a weapon was a matter of seconds for a sixth grade Battle-Emperor like Ah Ni.

Wu Yunbai turned around in order to warn Bu Fang. However, the scene that happened next made her eyes and mouth open wide in astonishment.

Bu Fang was frowning as he watched the spear grow larger and larger in his field of vision. His entire body was covered in goosebumps. Then, his pupils constricted and he subconsciously swung the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife in his hand. With true energy injected into the knife, it suddenly started gleaming with a golden radiance.

The intense pressure emanating from the spear was instantly dispersed by Bu Fang's swing and then the kitchen knife that was gleaming with a golden radiance stopped right in front of him.

Boom!

Ah Ni was overwhelmed by the dreadful pressure that suddenly emanated from the kitchen knife. His complexion instantly turned pale as he felt a pressure descend upon him without any warning

and he was pressed down onto the ground.

It was fear and reverence that originated from the depths of his bloodline. Ah Ni could not believe that all of the muscles in his body were trembling. He... was actually trembling? Furthermore, he was trembling because of a human?!

This person... Who exactly was he?!

Wu Yunbai's eyes and mouth were wide open in shock. She felt as if her world view was completely overturned.

What happened to getting pierced by the spear? Why was the serpent-men prostrating on the ground instead?

Bu Fang stopped inserting his true energy into the Golden Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife and it immediately regained its unassuming appearance. The true energy consumption while activating the full form of the kitchen knife was simply too high for him. Therefore, Bu Fang would usually not fully activate the full form during normal circumstances.

Ah Ni felt the pressure upon his body drastically weakened. He raised his head with much difficulty and fiercely glared at Bu Fang.

However, Bu Fang ignored his gaze. With a conflicted expression on his face, he glanced at the direction where the two Battle-Saints were fighting and then glanced at the swampland behind him.

"I wouldn't go in, if I were you. The battle between Battle-Saints is terrifying," Wu Yunbai said. After recovering from her shock, she could not help but become curious about Bu Fang.

Bu Fang gave her a glance and asked with a frown, "What are the Battle-Saints fighting each other for?"

"You don't know?" Wu Yunbai was slightly bewildered. Did the person in front of her brazenly marched into this place for a purpose other than obtaining the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus?

"They're naturally fighting over a spirit herb..." Wu Yunbai

replied.

Bu Fang nodded and said, "All the more reason for me to stay."

Wu Yunbai's mind went blank for a moment. She thought that she had already explained quite clearly enough. Two seventh grade Battle-Saints were fighting over a spirit herb. Why would a fifth grade Battle-King still want to go in there? Did he wish to seek his own death?

"You're not leaving... Is it because of that spirit herb?" Wu Yunbai asked with a frown.

Bu Fang gave her a puzzled glance. He was obviously not leaving because of the spirit herb. What other reasons could there be?

"Of course," Bu Fang replied.

However, just then the ground started to violently shake and a loud rumble suddenly came from underneath the earth.

Wu Yunbai's pupils suddenly constricted and her entire body was enveloped in a cold chill. Bu Fang was expressionlessly standing still. The two of them slowly turned to look behind them...

Their entire field of vision was filled with a massive shadow that blotted out the sun. A gigantic and horrifying spirit beast emanating an aura filled with malice was slowly observing them with its blood-red pupils.

Ah Ni was looking up from the ground with a face filled with terror. His entire body was trembling like a leaf.

"S... seventh grade spirit beast, the Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa!"

Chapter 169: How Do I Obtain the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus?

The Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa was a powerful species of spirit beast that resided in the depths of the Illusory Spirit Swamp. This species naturally became fourth grade when they reached adulthood and then molted once every hundred years. A seventh grade Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa was a horrifying existence that had already molted three times with a lifespan of a few hundred years.

This humongous creature was emerging from the swamp and its height reached a few dozen meters. The scales all over its body were glittering under the sunlight and its eyes were the size of paper lanterns.

On top of the Black Swamp Boa's head, there was a lump of meat that resembled the comb of a chicken. It was entirely blood-red in color and filled with an abundant amount of spirit energy. That was where the essence of the Black Swamp Boa was located. As the Swamp Boa fanned out the two flaps like the hood of a cobra beside its head and flicked its forked tongue, a dreadful pressure was emanating from its body.

"This is a Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa that's about to advance into eighth grade. It must have been attracted by the aura of the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus," Wu Yunbai said with a grim expression. Suddenly, a figure swiftly sprinted over from a distance and stopped behind her.

It was the subordinate who was left outside as a lookout. His current expression did not look too good either.

"Miss, the area around the serpent-men tribe is flooded with spirit beasts. The Poison Frogs and Spirit Tail Crocodiles have gathered en masse . We're... completely surrounded!" The subordinate's expression was grave. A seventh grade Blood Crown

Black Swamp Boa plus swarms of other spirit beasts was a disastrous situation.

Wu Yunbai did not think that they would suddenly find themselves in a dangerous situation either.

With so many spirit beasts in the surroundings, breaking through the encirclement would be difficult and very dangerous. The best solution at the moment was running back into the serpent-men tribe and let the seventh grade Battle-Saints deal with the Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa instead.

"Let's escape inside," Wu Yunbai said to Bu Fang and then took the lead by running back in the direction she came from.

Bu Fang was startled for a moment. He gave the Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa that was nearly covering the entire sky a glance and the corners of his mouth twitched. Then, he twirled the dragon bone kitchen knife in his hand and followed after Wu Yunbai.

He was not a fool... When facing such a humongous creature and a swamp of spirit beasts, avoiding them was the smartest choice.

Ah Ni was trembling as he got up from the ground. He hurriedly fled while carrying the other three serpent-men and also headed in the same direction as Bu Fang.

Suddenly, the Black Swamp Boa's eyes started glowing and its humongous body started to slowly slither forward. When Ah Ni turned his head and glanced back, he witnessed many of the herb fields being devastated under the Black Swamp Boa's advance. As he watched the numerous spirit herbs getting trampled, his heart hurt so much that he could not breathe.

However, he did not dare to turn back. Even though the serpent-men had a natural suppression effect on snake-like spirit beasts... the humongous creature behind him was simply far too terrifying. It was impossible for a serpent-men.

When facing such a dreadful Black Swamp Boa, escape was his only choice.

Bu Fang expressionlessly followed Wu Yunbai and soon reached an open area with a pond in the center surrounded by a bamboo fencing. Within the pond, a faint blue lotus bud was floating on the water.

Bu Fang's eyes immediately lit up when he saw the abundant amount of spirit energy hovering above the lotus bud. A seventh grade spirit herb! It was actually a seventh grade spirit herb!

No wonder there was a battle between the Battle-Saints. Furthermore, it attracted a seventh grade spirit beast and even a stampede of spirit beasts...

Not all seventh grade spirit herbs would attract seventh grade spirit beasts. However, there were some special seventh grade spirit herbs that would definitely attract seventh grade spirit beasts... because these special spirit herbs were capable of assisting spirit beasts in achieving a breakthrough in their cultivation. It was normal for these spirit herbs to trigger a great battle between seventh grade spirit beasts.

Back then in the Valley of the Fallen Phoenix, the scene where two seventh grade spirit beasts fought over the Phoenix Blood Herb occurred because the spirit herb could help them achieve a breakthrough. It was likely that the spirit herb in front of them also possessed such an effect.

This was a spirit herb that was comparable to the Phoenix Blood Herb!

Bu Fang's heart was thumping in excitement. This was simply a stroke of good luck. After searching for so long, he finally found the ideal spirit herb.

"Ice Soul Monarch Lotus... Ice attribute? The Phoenix Blood Herb is fire attribute. If I use the two herbs to brew the wine, it'll be an

amalgamation of ice and fire. If I add the Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit into the mixture... it'll be perfect!" Bu Fang's eyes were completely lit up.

Boom boom!

The two Battle-Saints in the sky had stopped fighting and landed on the ground with grave expressions. The appearance of a seventh grade spirit beast was enough to demand their attention.

"A seventh grade Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa, was it lured here by the aura of the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus? Damn it..." The serpent-men elder silently snorted with a frown while flicking his tail.

From a distance, a large group of serpent-men slowly approached with an elderly serpent-men in middle.

"Head elder!" the serpent-men elder respectfully said after noticing the approaching person and the head elder nodded in response. His cloudy eyes were grave as he gazed at that humongous creature, Black Swamp Boa.

"Third elder, are you able to hold back this Black Swamp Boa?" the head elder gravely asked.

That third elder of the serpent-men tribe gave the Black Swamp Boa a glance and replied with a sigh, "No, this beast has already experienced three moltings. Furthermore, it's about to experience its fourth molting. With its horrifying combat prowess, I am not its opponent."

Even the third elder was not an opponent... Were they going to let this beast snatch away the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus that they had been cultivating for so long just like that? How frustrating...

The head elder let out a sigh and shook his head. It was because their tribe was too weak. If this was the serpent-men's imperial city, something like this would never happen. Their sovereign would need only to lift a finger to erase this beast!

Unfortunately, this was not the imperial city and their sovereign was not here either.

Just when the head elder was mulling over his options, Wu Yunbai suddenly stood out and said, "Head elder, why don't we work together..."

The head elder frowned as his gaze landed on Wu Yunbai and an intense pressure suddenly pressed down upon her. Even though head elder's cultivation level was not high, most people would be unable to withstand the powerful pressure that he was exerting.

However, Wu Yunbai was the young master of the White Cloud Villa after all and her mental strength was robust. With a faint smile on her lips, she indifferently looked back at the head elder.

"Your tribe only has a single Battle-Saint while our side has a Battle-Saint as well. If the two Battle-Saints work together, we should be able to deal with this Black Swamp Boa, right?" Wu Yunbai's words made a lot of sense. It was also the best solution at the moment...

The head elder contemplated for a long while and still could not come up with a better solution. Therefore, without any other choice, he nodded and said, "I accept your proposal but we won't give you the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus. Instead, after driving away the Black Swamp Boa, we'll compensate your help with a few sixth grade spirit herbs."

Wu Yunbai raised her eyebrows and smiled without saying anything. She only nodded to show her agreement.

Immediately, the two Battle-Saints looked at each other in embarrassment. Just moments before, they were still engaged in intense combat and now they were suddenly allies. It was rather amusing.

The humongous body of the Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa started coiling itself into a ball. It was rearing its gigantic head and

flicking its tongue. It actually stopped moving forward.

"This beast has already gained intelligence. It's waiting for the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus to bloom before making a move!" The head elder's expression immediately crumbled as he watched the Black Swamp Boa that stopped moving.

"There's no need to hurry. It's a good opportunity for the two Battle-Saints to recover their true energy," Wu Yunbai said with a smile.

Bu Fang was watching them the entire time. He stared at the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus and could not help but make a frown. A seventh grade spirit beast, two Battle-Saints, and the serpent-men tribe... With so much opposition, his chances of obtaining the spirit herb were practically inexistent. However, the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus was indispensable in order for him to brew a wine that could surpass the Dragon's Breath...

Therefore, Bu Fang's gaze shifted away from the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus and landed on the elderly figure of the head elder.

"That... I have a question. If I wanted this Ice Soul Monarch Lotus, would you... consent?"

Chapter 170: The Serpent-Men's Cuisine

Bu Fang's voice was not loud. With the bestial roars coming from outside of the tribe, his words were mostly drowned out.

At first, the head elder took no notice of Bu Fang; or, in other words, he was completely ignoring Bu Fang. A mere fifth grade Battle-King was simply unable to attract his attention. From his point of view, Bu Fang was just one of Wu Yunbai's servants.

However, when Bu Fang said those words, the head elder's gaze immediately froze and Wu Yunbai's face stiffened for a moment as well. When they looked toward Bu Fang and saw the earnestness on his face, they were suddenly struck with bewilderment.

Did he come here to make jokes? A mere fifth grade Battle-King was actually dreaming of obtaining the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus. Why did he not ask for the moon too!

Wu Yunbai's expression became extremely odd. She did not think this young man would actually spout such nonsense. Did he not realize that the two seventh grade Battle-Saints were guarding the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus? There was also the Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa waiting outside... Where exactly did he find the courage to say such words?

"Your servant really likes to joke around... I've already said before, this Ice Soul Monarch Lotus is very important to our tribe. If you're asking for any other sixth grade spirit herbs, I'll gladly fulfill your request. However, if you're insisting on the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus... then the deal is off," the head elder said while slightly waving his tail.

"Servant?" Wu Yunbai blinked her eyes as she thought, "Looks like they've misunderstood his identity..."

Bu Fang furrowed his eyebrows. From the head elder's reply, it did not seem like they would let the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus fall

into the hands of others. Things were going to be difficult in that case.

The Ice Soul Monarch Lotus was the best ingredient for brewing that Bu Fang had encountered so far. It was an excellent spirit herb that was highly compatible with the Phoenix Blood Herb and Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit. Bu Fang was reluctant to give up just like that.

However, Bu Fang knew well enough that the head elder would definitely not just hand over a seventh grade spirit herb like the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus. Therefore, he was still thinking of a method to obtain the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus.

"This serpent-men tribe's need for the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus is a little too extreme. Could there be... a secret reason behind this?"

Bu Fang narrowed his eyes and pondered for a while but still could not figure out that secret reason.

With its humongous body coiled into a ball nearby, the Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa silently waited for the blooming of the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus while overlooking the herb farm.

The blooming of the spirit herb would be the moment when the Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa strikes.

A large group of spirit beasts was gathered around the Black Swamp Boa. These spirit beasts had vastly different appearances. Some were extremely ugly while others were fairly pleasing to the eye. They were all quietly waiting while lying down next to the Black Swamp Boa.

When the Black Swamp Boa made a move, they would follow suit and swoop down on the tribe.

This wait lasted for a long while. In the sky, two crescent moons quietly emerged from the clouds and radiated cold rays of moonlight. The moonlight illuminated the icy-cold scales of the Black Swamp Boa and made its appearance eerie.

"There's still a few more hours until the blooming of the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus. Everyone, please follow me into our tribe to have a meal first," the head elder said.

Wu Yunbai raised her eyebrows and then nodded before heading into the serpent-men tribe along with her two subordinates.

Bu Fang was still spacing out. He was thinking up a method to obtain the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus but woke up when Wu Yunbai gently tapped his shoulder.

"The head elder of the serpent-men is inviting us for a meal. I've never eaten the serpent-men's cuisine before. Let's go together," Wu Yunbai said.

Bu Fang was surprised for a moment. The serpent-men's cuisine? He was originally going to refuse but his eyes immediately lit up after hearing those words and he gave a slight nod.

The warriors of the serpent-men led the way while slowly slithering at the front.

Meanwhile, Bu Fang followed behind them along with Wu Yunbai and her subordinates. They were led along a path in the middle of a cluster of crudely-built buildings.

Bu Fang was not too concerned about the condition of the buildings. He was observing the surroundings with eyes filled with curiosity. He knew very little regarding the living habits of a tribal community especially those from another world. It was precisely this lack of understanding that piqued his curiosity.

Even though these residences of the serpent-men were not large, every single building underwent long periods of renovation in order to reach their current size.

Above the entrances of these residences, Bu Fang noticed rows of dried fishes. The moisture of these dried fishes were completely removed after prolonged exposure to the wind and sun, allowing them to be stored for a longer period.

Not only fishes were being dried. Bu Fang also saw many pieces of dried meat as well as some dried fruits.

As this place was a swamp, the high humidity sped up the rate of food spoilage. With the difficult living conditions, the serpent-men could only use such a primitive method to preserve their food.

After the group walked for a while, they detected a faint fragrance wafting toward them. This was the familiar smell of food.

The group reached an open clearing. Somewhere nearby, a voluptuous serpent-woman was stirring the contents of a large black wok with a metal spatula. The faint fragrance was drifting out from the wok.

"Our tribe is a small place. If there's any inadequacy in our hospitality, please excuse us," the head elder said to Wu Yunbai.

Wu Yunbai performed a fist and palm salute in response but her eyes were inquisitively gazing toward the large black wok. She was extremely curious about the sort of food that the serpent-men ate.

Obtaining ingredients was not an issue since they were living in the Illusory Spirit Swamp. However, the culinary level of the serpent-men might be a huge problem. After all, they were constantly embroiled in a fight for survival against a hostile environment. Their research on food would naturally be less advanced than that of humans.

"Please start eating, this is the fish soup made by our tribe's number one chef. There's nothing much in the Illusory Spirit Swamp, except for this fish. This species of fish can be found in the puddles seen everywhere. Don't underestimate them, though, as they're a rare delicacy," the head elder said with a smile. Then, serpent-men servants brought out ceramic bowls and placed them in front of Wu Yunbai and the others.

Bu Fang received a bowl of fish soup as well. As he clasped the

warm bowl of fish soup in his hands, his expression suddenly became rather odd.

Fish soup? They actually served fish soup to him...

Bu Fang was obviously knowledgeable with fish soup. After all, his Fish Head Tofu Soup received praise from many of his customers. However, this was his first time tasting the serpent-men's fish soup as well. Today was an opportunity for him to try out something new.

"The main ingredient of this dish is actually a type of low grade spirit beast. However, having a low grade is actually better since many of our people are able to capture them," the head elder exclaimed.

This fish was considered their staple food. Within the swamp, where growing crops was not possible, this type of fish was commonly seen on their dinner tables...

Wu Yunbai was clasping a bowl of fish soup in her hands as well. The soup appeared slightly white in color. The liquid was not very clear but the aroma was pretty good. The overall appearance was quite appetizing.

Many of the serpent-men sitting around them were holding ceramic bowls with smiles on their faces. They had absolute confidence in their fish soup. After all, this was a cuisine that was created by them! It was more than enough for subduing some humans.

As Wu Yunbai drank a mouthful of the slightly hot fish soup, its rich flavor spread in her mouth and sent a jolt through her mind.

"Not bad, it's very delicious! It's more delicious than the average fish soups cooked by human chefs. It's fresh and fragrant," Wu Yunbai earnestly said with praise and then continued drinking a few more mouthfuls.

The serpent-men suddenly burst into laughter. The fact that they

could subdue this human was a happy matter for them as well.

Having their favorite fish soup acknowledged by others was a form of happiness, even if their race was different.

However, just when everyone was drinking the fish soup and praising its delicious flavor, a voice filled with disdain rang out. "You call this a fish soup? The fishy smell was not completely removed. Furthermore, the taste is so horrendous. This is simply a waste of an ingredient."

Everyone was slightly stunned by the voice that suddenly rang out. Even the alluring serpent-woman who was cooking the fish soup was startled.

They all turned toward the source of the voice and saw the scene where Bu Fang spat out the mouthful of fish soup in his mouth with an expression filled with disgust...

Bu Fang's face was almost scrunched together from revulsion to the point where many of the serpent-men were questioning their own life choices... Did the fish soup really taste that terrible?

Chapter 171: This Fish... Is Suitable for Grilling

Since the tribe was situated in the Illusory Spirit Swamp, the serpent-men frequently consumed this type of fish. They were also extremely familiar with its cooking method and the dish could be considered a local cuisine.

That scrunched up expression on Bu Fang's face, as if he had just eaten [Coptis Chinensis](#), was simply baffling to them.

The freshness and sweetness of the fish was perfectly expressed in the fish soup. The culinary skills of the serpent-woman chef who made the fish soup were pretty good as well. The dish was perhaps not as meticulous as dishes made by humans but the taste was still passable in the eyes of Wu Yunbai and the others.

As a result, everyone's attention was focused on Bu Fang. Many of the serpent-men were angrily glaring at him. The head elder and the others were frowning as well.

On the contrary, a faint smile was on her lips as Wu Yunbai watched Bu Fang with great interest. This young man... Was he really not here to make jokes? This was the serpent-men's tribe after all. Even if their fish soup really tasted that horrible, there would be no need for him to say that out loud. Furthermore... the taste of the fish soup was still pretty good.

"Human, what are you saying?! My mother's fish soup is the most delicious in the entire tribe, what do you even know? Besides, do you know how to cook in the first place?!" A young serpent-girl angrily glared at Bu Fang and let out a snort while waving around her exquisite tail in frustration.

The serpent-men around her all nodded in agreement. Elder sister Mu's culinary skill might not be number one in the entire serpent-men race, but she was unparalleled within the tribe. Even

though the fish soup was not the dish that she was most proficient in, no one was tired of drinking it.

The alluring serpent-woman called elder sister Mu, who was also the mother of that young serpent-girl, was looking at Bu Fang with a dissatisfied expression while holding a ladle in her hand.

Bu Fang was surprised for a moment. He did not expect his words to trigger such a reaction from the people around him. He was merely stating a fact. From his point of view, the taste of the fish soup was indeed horrible.

As a chef, Bu Fang's taste was already accustomed to the level of his own culinary skill. If a horrible-tasting dish entered his mouth, he would lose his appetite and his expression would turn ugly. Spitting out the fish soup was just a subconscious action...

In simpler terms, his taste buds became even more sensitive after frequently eating dishes filled with true energy. As his sense of taste dramatically improved, even the tiniest bit of flavor in a dish was noticeable. Therefore, he was even more particular about the flaws in the dishes.

This sort of improvement in one's sense of taste was a tremendous help for chefs. It raised their precision in judging the taste of ingredients and their preparation as well.

Bu Fang did not have any intention of humiliating her. It was really just a subconscious action...

The people around him were dumbfounded from the blank expression on Bu Fang's face. Even elder sister Mu was amused.

In the first place, she was not someone who was easily angered. Perhaps her dish really did not suit Bu Fang's tastes, everyone had their own preference after all. Unexpectedly, elder sister Mu did not feel the blame was on Bu Fang.

After Bu Fang recovered from his surprise, he heard the young serpent-girl's words and broke into a smile. He gave her a glance

and said, "Of course I know how to cook. I am a chef as well."

Bu Fang's voice was not loud but instantly caused the room to quiet down. Wu Yunbai felt as if her worldview was being renewed once more. The young man in front of her eyes was a chef? Of all things, a chef?

However, since you were a chef, what were you doing in the serpent-men tribe? I always thought you were an adventurer!

Should a chef not be preparing food in a kitchen?

"Oh? Are you a chef as well? Pleased to meet you. It seems that you're dissatisfied with the dish that I made." Elder sister Mu was surprised for a moment and then her expression became serious.

If Bu Fang was a chef, his fussiness toward food was understandable. The sense of taste of a chef was far more sensitive than ordinary people and they were more particular about the taste of their food. It was much easier to please an ordinary person with a dish than a chef.

Bu Fang nodded and slowly walked toward elder sister Mu with the steaming bowl of fish soup in his hands.

"Overall, your fish soup is still passable. Every single step was executed very well but the steps themselves could only be considered conventional. Furthermore, you do not understand the characteristics of this fish. Some fish are suitable for making soup while this particular fish isn't."

As Bu Fang solemnly walked toward elder sister Mu, he could not help but enter his venomous tongue mode. Whenever he tasted a dish, he would always lose his self control and start evaluating the dish.

"That is not to say that this fish cannot be used for cooking soup but you're lacking the required seasoning. For example, if some Spring Sun Herb was added during the cooking process, it would not only remove the fishiness but also the increase the tastiness of

the fish. But what I want to say is that making soup with this fish is simply a waste. Even drying this fish first and then steaming it would still be more delicious than making fish soup..."

As Bu Fang continued prattling on, everyone else in the room was starting to drift into drowsiness. After all, none of them were chefs and their understanding of food had not reached such a profound level. Whether the Spring Sun Herb or control over the heat or the characteristics of the fish... None of them understood anything.

On the contrary, elder sister Mu's eyes grew brighter and brighter while listening to Bu Fang's appraisal because she realized his words were all true.

The taste of the fish when first dried and then steamed was indeed much more delicious compared to the fish soup. As for the Spring Sun Herb... she did not fully understand either.

After Bu Fang was done talking, he became expressionless once more. He was someone with few words in the first place. It was just that he became extremely talkative when evaluating dishes...

"You... You... After saying so much, why don't you make something tastier than my mother's fish soup if you're so capable! If you're just going to criticize my mother's dish like this, then you're all talk and no action! You're a bad person!" The young serpent-girl was filled with grievance. Bu Fang was not holding back when he evaluated the dish. After witnessing the dish made by her mother whom she revered getting belittled in such a manner, her eyes welled up with tears.

Noticing that her daughter was about to burst into tears, elder sister Mu hurriedly consoled her.

"This young man's words are correct, there's still room for improvement in my cooking. After hearing his appraisal today, I've learnt a lot. What are you crying for? We should be thanking him instead," elder sister Mu softly said while caressing the bridge of her daughter's nose with a finger.

The young serpent-girl immediately stopped sobbing and fiddled with her hands while pursing her lips together. With her eyes reddened, she softly sniffled while looking at her mother.

The corners of Bu Fang's lips were twitching. There was basically no difference between this young serpent-girl and a human child. She immediately resorted to crying when a disagreement occurred... Nonetheless, he was in the wrong for making a young girl cry.

Bu Fang pondered for a moment and then said, "How about this, since it's still early, I'll cook a dish using fish and let everyone have a taste. Hopefully, everyone will enjoy it. It's also a compensation from me for taking the liberty to evaluate the dish."

Bu Fang's words caused the people around him to exclaim in astonishment once more. This human... was really a chef? And he was actually going to personally prepare a meal?

Wu Yunbai's eyes widened with incredulity... Was this fellow serious? If his dish turned out to be terrible... he would become a laughingstock!

Even though there were some similarities between humans and serpent-men, no one could guarantee that their tastes were the same.

Elder sister Mu looked at Bu Fang in surprise. Her eyes slightly narrowed as she saw the confident look on Bu Fang's face. She straightened her back and said, "It would be our pleasure. Here is the cooking stove, I'll tidy it up first for you to use."

Elder sister Mu swiftly cleaned up the cooking stove and then looked toward Bu Fang.

Bu Fang did not immediately start cooking. First, he pinched the fish prepared for him by the serpent-men. It was an extremely plump first grade spirit beast fish.

After tasting the fish earlier on, Bu Fang already had an idea

about the best method to prepare it.

This type of fish was not suitable for making soup but it was extremely suitable for another cooking method.

And that was... grilling.

Coptis Chinensis(黄连) - It is a medicinal herb that's particularly known for its bitterness in China.

Chapter 172: Aromatic Grilled Fish (1)

While everyone was watching him, Bu Fang reached out his hand and suddenly pulled the fish out of the basin of water. He effortlessly picked the fish up with two fingers skillfully clamping onto its sides.

The fish was struggling in Bu Fang's fingers but could not break free as if it was caught in a vise grip.

Bu Fang was expressionless as he inspected the fish. Honestly speaking, the fish was indeed very plump. Its body was entirely made up of meat. His eyes slightly lit up and his satisfaction toward the ingredient rose.

It was not an easy matter for chefs to find ingredients that satisfied them.

Bu Fang did not choose to use the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife. Instead, he picked up the kitchen knife that elder sister Mu left on the cooking stove. As he twirled the kitchen knife in his hand, the dazzling technique immediately caused many of the people present to exclaim in astonishment.

Twirling his kitchen knife had already become a habit for Bu Fang. After countless hours of practicing the Meteor Knife Technique, he would now subconsciously twirl the kitchen knife. It was not for the sake of showing off.

Bu Fang was expressionless as he swiped the kitchen knife across the belly of the fish. The sharp edge of the knife directly ripped open its fair and tender belly as if it was paper.

Bu Fang then began the steps of removing the fish's innards.

Bu Fang's movements were fluid as if he was drawing a painting. The process that should originally appear bloody and violent became strangely beautiful.

After cleaning the fish with water, he widened the incision at its

belly and split it apart. The fish was laid open on the chopping board like a pancake.

Bu Fang lightly flicked the blade of the kitchen knife with his finger. He then gently carved on the fish with six strokes and patted the plump flesh of the fish.

With that, the preparation of the fish was done. However, this was just the completion of the preparatory step. Grilling a fish was not so simple.

The people around him were puzzledly watching Bu Fang. They could not figure out what sort of dish he was making. Judging from the appearance, it should not be fish soup. However, if it was braised fish... it should not be sliced in such a manner... If he was making dried fish, there was not enough time.

Therefore, it was not just the people around him but also elder sister Mu who was guessing what sort of dish Bu Fang was preparing to cook.

Suddenly, Bu Fang seemed to have recalled something. He turned toward elder sister Mu who was deep in thought and asked, "Do you have any vegetables?"

Elder sister Mu made a frown, then nodded and said, "We have vegetables but there's only a little. Not much fruits and vegetables grow within the Illusory Spirit Swamp in the first place. They're even rarer than this fish."

Bu Fang looked back at the fish that was already prepared and said, "Then forget it, I'll provide the ingredients myself."

Bu Fang then took out many fruits and vegetables from the system's storage space as well as various containers that were filled with seasoning. He prepared these things earlier on while he was waiting for the system to carry out the teleportation.

Everyone was dumbfounded as they watched Bu Fang take out the assorted items. They were at a loss on how to react.

At this point, they were almost certain that Bu Fang was indeed a chef. Furthermore, it seemed like he came here for a vacation...

What kind of an adventurer would fill his dimensional storage with seasonings, fruits, and vegetables instead of healing medicine and elixirs?

After Bu Fang washed the fruits and vegetables, he swiftly diced them into pieces and placed them onto a plate.

Once all of these were done, Bu Fang placed the fish into a basin. Then, he poured various seasonings into the basin and started marinating the fish.

During the marinating process, Bu Fang infused the fish with his true energy to speed up the process.

After approximately ten minutes, Bu Fang finished marinating the fish. He then took out two large pieces of leaves that came from a spirit herb and wrapped the marinated fish with the leaves.

Before wrapping the fish, he even coated the entire fish with a layer of sauce.

The fish was wrapped in spirit herb leaves? Just what kind of dish was this fellow making? None of them had ever seen this sort of cooking method before.

Wu Yunbai's eyes were filled with curiosity as well. As the young master of the White Cloud Villa, she had tasted plenty of delicious food before. The White Cloud Villas had also specially hired many chefs with superb culinary skills. Even so, she had never seen Bu Fang's cooking method before.

Bu Fang did not pay any heed to their gaze. Once he started cooking, he would devote all of his attention into the dish. According to his own words, only then would a chef be able to pour his feelings into the dish.

After removing the large wok, Bu Fang covered the hole of the stove with branches and then placed the fish wrapped in spirit

herb leaves on top.

Earlier on, Bu Fang had already doused these branches in water to prevent the fire underneath from burning them. Furthermore, with his true energy covering the branches, it would be difficult for them to catch on fire.

Meanwhile, the fish wrapped in spirit herb leaves would receive the heat from the fire.

Bu Fang had no other choice. Originally, he should use a commercial oven to grill the fish. However, since this was not his kitchen, there was no oven at all. Therefore, he could only set up a temporary grilling pit. Even though the working condition was slightly harsher, he could still produce the grilled fish.

Everyone was completely astounded by Bu Fang's strange actions. Some of them even started snickering... After all, no one had ever seen such a strange method of preparing food before.

Not even using a wok... Was this dish edible? The fish was first wrapped in spirit herb leaves and then roasted over a fire? Was a dish made in such a manner really edible?

Many of the serpent-men were throwing questioning gazes at Bu Fang.

Meanwhile, elder sister Mu was thoughtfully watching Bu Fang's actions. From her point of view, almost every single one of his movement was smooth and uninterrupted, the result of having integrated his culinary skill into his body.

Steam started emerging from the spirit herb leaves along with a rich fragrance. At first, the scent was not that strong. Everyone was sniffing the air but they only thought the scent smelt pleasant.

However, as the fish continued to cook, the fragrance grew stronger and stronger and nearly engulfed the entire place. Everyone was sniffing the air.

The young serpent-girl was even hugging her mother's tail while

continuously smacking her lips. Now and then, saliva dripped from her mouth... The scent was too aromatic.

The serpent-men had never smelled such an aromatic scent before. It was arousing all of their appetites.

Even the head elder's cheeks trembled for a moment as he looked toward Bu Fang in incredulity. He never expected Bu Fang to possess such a high level of culinary skill.

An euphoric expression appeared on Wu Yunbai's face as well. Her astonishment was not any lesser than anyone else present. She understood more than them about the difficulty and innovativeness of Bu Fang's cooking method.

The difficulty of preparing food by wrapping a dish in leaves and then roasting it over a fire... was extremely high. Not only did this test Bu Fang's control over the heat but also demanded a high level of control at manipulating true energy.

"This person..." Wu Yunbai muttered to herself.

Meanwhile, Bu Fang was placing his hand on the spirit herb leaves. After feeling the temperature, a smile suddenly appeared on his lips.

After twirling the kitchen knife in his hand, he sliced open the bundle of spirit herb leaves.

During the instant when the spirit herb leaves fell apart, a thick sauce splattered everywhere and spread a rich aroma into the surroundings.

The aroma, accompanied by a puff of steam, rose into the air.

Chapter 173: Aromatic Grilled Fish (2)

As the aroma enveloped the entire place, everyone could not help but be mesmerized.

It never crossed their mind that the smell of fish could reach such an enchanting level. The moment when Bu Fang sliced open the spirit herb leaves, the fragrance instantly took hold of their senses and they fell into an euphoric state.

Wu Yunbai swallowed her saliva. Her eyes were staring straight at the bundle of steaming leaves. Even though the tantalizing fish inside was not visible because of the rising steam, she felt an incredible urge to immediately taste this delicious dish just from smelling the aroma.

Both elder sister Mu's body and mind trembled in incredulity. The aroma of the dish... had simply exceeded her understanding. She cooked this type of fish on a daily basis but the aroma of her dishes never reached such a level even when she braised the fish. Bu Fang's method of preparing the fish had completely brought out its smell.

This young man... was definitely a super incredible chef!

As the young serpent-girl breathed in the aroma, she was filled with craving for the dish. She slithered toward the cooking stove with her small body and tried peeking over the counter to catch a glimpse of the fish inside the spirit herb leaves.

However, because of her height, she could only see the steam rising from the leaves and not the tantalizing fish inside.

How frustrating! After watching for a while and still not seeing anything, the young serpent-girl gave up and turned toward Bu Fang. With her childish voice, she asked, "Human big brother, this fish... can we start eating?"

This was not just the young serpent-girl's thoughts but also the

thoughts of everyone present.

They also wanted to know whether they could start eating. With such an enticing aroma, everyone wanted to have a taste.

Bu Fang gave the young serpent-girl a glance. She was no longer about to burst into tears like before. It seemed that the attraction of food was powerful enough to distract her.

A smile appeared on his lips as Bu Fang replied, "Of course... not."

Uhh... Everyone's face stiffened for a moment. They could not understand the reason for his reply. Why were they not allowed to start eating? The fish was so aromatic, what was the reason for not allowing them to have a taste?

The eyes of the young serpent-girl widened and she angrily puffed up her cheeks...

Elder sister Mu was also looking toward Bu Fang in puzzlement. The dish was already finished... Why couldn't they have a taste? He could not even accede... to the simple request of a little girl?

Bu Fang did not pay any attention to their expressions and instead started the fire of another cooking stove. Once the temperature of the wok was hot enough, he added some oil and poured in the julienned vegetables before he started stir-frying.

Bu Fang threw in the seasoning in a skillful manner. After a short while, the stir-frying of the side dish was finished.

The expression on everyone's face was slightly awkward. As it turned out, the dish was not finished yet. No wonder he refused to let the young serpent-girl have a taste. A chef would naturally refuse to let the customer have a taste if the dish was not complete. This was a basic principle of a chef.

Using a spatula, he directly poured the slightly viscous side dish over the fish on the leaves. The overwhelming fragrance of the side dish mixed together with the aroma of the fish produced an indescribably euphoric aroma.

After Bu Fang sliced the fruits and placed them on the leaves, this colorful dish of Spirit Swamp Grilled Fish was completed.

While Bu Fang was making the side dish, he stir-fried the vegetables over high heat in a short duration. Therefore, the appearance of the ingredients were still as glossy and alluring as ever.

The meat of the fish lying in gravy was slightly trembling. The incisions made on its body had opened up because of the grilling process. Its white and tender flesh was covered in grease as well as the sauce.

Bu Fang twirled the kitchen knife in his hand before placing it back down on the cutting board. He calmly gave the crowd a glance and said, "The dish is completed, please have a taste."

Completed? It was finally completed! Waiting for this fish to be grilled was practically torture for them...

Looking at the steaming grilled fish, everyone was suddenly overwhelmed with indescribable emotions.

Elder sister Mu slithered toward the grilled fish and her eyes were filled with amazement. It... was simply too beautiful. The colors of the vegetables were bright and diverse. Because of the oil on their surface, they appeared to be glittering with vibrant colors. The aroma of the fish was also outstanding. Without a doubt... this dish was flawless! It was definitely going to be delicious.

"Big brother, can we start eating now?" the young serpent-girl eagerly asked once more.

Bu Fang nodded. He did not reject her request this time.

The young serpent-girl was immediately overjoyed. She grabbed her mother's hand and urgently said, "Mom, hurry and feed me the fish!"

In order to placate her daughter, elder sister Mu grabbed a pair of chopsticks. She did not choose to pick up any of the side dish.

Instead, she picked up a piece of the fish and popped the meat into her daughter's mouth.

Once the piece of meat entered her mouth, everyone's gaze was focused on the young serpent-girl. They all wanted to see her reaction.

The moment when the young serpent-girl tasted the meat of the fish, her eyes widened and her face was filled with astonishment...

This fish was... compared to the fish cooked by her mother... really more delicious!

Elder sister Mu narrowed her eyes and her gaze landed on the grill fish.

Bu Fang did not serve the grilled fish on a plate. Instead, he left the fish on the grilling pit with the fire still brightly burning below. The gravy was bubbling and the meat of the fish was trembling...

This seemed like a gradual process. At the start, the taste of the fish would definitely be fresh and delicious. However, after a while, the meat of the fish would gradually harden but its taste would become more flavorful and its texture would become even firmer!

Elder sister Mu swallowed her saliva with a gulp and then used her chopsticks to tear off the meat near the gills of the fish. This was the most delicious part of the fish.

Once the meat entered her mouth, elder sister Mu could not help but narrow her eyes in ecstasy. The flavors of the fish spreading and lingering within her mouth were sending her into throes of pleasure.

By then, the rest of the people could not sit still any longer and all started coming forward. Wu Yunbai popped a piece of meat into her mouth as well and was completely taken prisoner by its flavors. This fish... was the most delicious fish she had ever tasted.

Nothing could compare against its flavors.

"Hmm... There seems to be spirit energy inside the meat? How is that even possible... The meat of a first grade spirit beast shouldn't have any spirit energy left after cooking, right?" Wu Yunbai thought in slight puzzlement.

Bu Fang seemed to have sensed her confusion. A smile appeared on his lips as he said, "These leaves are actually from a third grade spirit herb. It's rich in spirit energy and has a calming effect on the mind. After my preparation and cooking, the spirit energy in the spirit herb has gathered into the meat of the fish. Furthermore, its calming effect has also migrated over. In short, this grilled fish could be considered an elixir cuisine, although it's just the most basic elixir cuisine."

The spirit energy originated from the spirit herb? He could even migrate the calming effect? Elixir cuisine?

Wu Yunbai was stunned for a moment. She suddenly discovered that her bank of knowledge might be somewhat inadequate... She never realised that there was so much knowledge involved in culinary as well!

Elixir cuisine... was a term that she had obviously heard before. However, not just any chef was capable of making elixir cuisines. Even within the White Cloud Villa, only one out of the many great chefs was capable of making elixir cuisines. Furthermore, that chef's cultivation level was extremely formidable and cooking was just his hobby!

The young chef in front of her who was only a fifth grade Battle-King... could actually make elixir cuisines? That was simply... terrifying!

When the head elder of the serpent-men tribe heard elixir cuisine, his gaze immediately landed on Bu Fang. As he closedly stared at Bu Fang, his intense gaze filled with an inexplicable agitation made Bu Fang's hair stand on end.

Chapter 174: The Spirit Herb Is About to Bloom

The head elder of the serpent-men tribe gave Bu Fang a meaningful glance. However, he did not rashly approach Bu Fang but instead forced himself to calm down.

Bu Fang did not notice the look on the head elder's face. He was watching the numerous serpent-men relishing in his dish with a smile on his lips. The greatest affirmation for a chef was their customers enjoying their dishes. Seeing the smiles on their faces, a chef would feel happy as well.

The amount of meat on the fish was not much. After everyone took their turns, the entire fish was picked clean. After all, there were so many people present but only a single fish available.

Everyone stared at the fish bones remaining on the spirit herb leaves with yearning in their eyes. They wanted to eat more but Bu Fang only prepared a single serving.

The young serpent-girl licked her lips while narrowing her eyes. Even though she only got to eat a small portion of the fish, she was feeling really full. The spirit energy inside the fish was more than enough for the young serpent-girl to digest.

After everyone tried his dish, no one there doubted Bu Fang's culinary skill anymore. His ability to cook such a delicious grilled fish was already astonishing enough for them. Even elder sister Mu was nodding her head while eating the fish. The more she ate, the more she became aware of the techniques used in the grilled fish.

True energy culinary... Good heavens! She could hardly believe that the young man before her eyes was actually proficient in true energy culinary. When true energy was infused into a dish, its flavors would improve and its fragrance would become even more enticing. Furthermore, the spirit energy in the ingredients would

even be fully retained. It was simply unbelievable.

"Alright... Since we're all fully rested, everyone should get ready. There's still a bunch of spirit beasts waiting for us outside, so let's not lower our guard." When the head of the serpent-men noticed that everyone was still engrossed in the dish's aftertaste, he coughed a few times to get their attention.

Outside of the tribe, a humongous figure was quietly coiled into a ball. With an eye-catching, blood-red crown on its gigantic head, a hissing sound could be heard as it flicked its forked tongue.

The growls of the spirit beast were continuously resounding in the surroundings, lingering within the Illusory Spirit Swamp, and echoing into the distance.

The head elder's words immediately woke everyone up from their stupor. As they looked toward the humongous Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa, their expressions became grave.

However, most of the serpent-men were actually not too worried. For the serpent-men tribe to exist within a treacherous place like the Illusory Spirit Swamp for such a long time, they were naturally not just relying on a single seventh grade Battle-Saint. Beneath the tribe, there was a gigantic barrier magic array that encompassed the entire area. Each serpent-men tribe was protected by a magic array such as that.

The presence of a seventh grade Battle-Saint was only to ensure that they would not be too defenseless during an enemy attack. This protective magic array was their actual safeguard.

Since the magic array was passed down by the Serpentine Sovereign, a mere seventh grade spirit beast would not be able to destroy the barrier.

"Head elder, even though we have the protection of the magic array, the medicinal herb farm is not included in its range... Furthermore, the aura of this beast is growing more and more

powerful. It looks like it's about to undergo another molting. This won't be easy," The serpent-men Battle-Saint gave the Black Swamp Boa a glance. He felt the situation was really troublesome.

Sometimes, spirit beasts were harder to deal with than humans because of their tough skins and thick muscles as well as their strong capability in combat... Therefore, most humans were unwilling to face spirit beasts with equivalent cultivation levels as them.

"The Ice Soul Monarch Lotus must be protected... We need the seeds of the lotus, this beast must not be allowed to ruin the spirit herb!" the head elder solemnly said with a grave expression.

The serpent-men Battle-Saint let out a sigh and a hint of determination flashed in his eyes. He understood the importance of the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus toward the tribe as well.

As seconds passed by, the mood within the serpent-men became tense once more because everyone could feel the serious atmosphere that was spreading in the air.

The aroma emanating from the faint blue bud of the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus was becoming more and more intense. As the fragrance spread and enveloped the area, everyone felt refreshed and their eyes lit up.

"Looks like... the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus is about to bloom!" the head elder said.

Wu Yunbai nodded as well and signalled toward the Battle-Saint behind her to get ready for battle.

With two Battle-Saints guarding the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus, there was still a chance for them to succeed... The problem was the large bunch of spirit beasts gathered around the Black Swamp Boa. Even though there was a barrier protecting the tribe, activating the magic array would use up a large amount of crystals... Wu Yunbai was not sure how many crystals the serpent-men tribe's storage

had.

If their storage of crystals was not enough and the barrier went down, they would be facing a horde of disgusting spirit beasts...

Bu Fang was quietly standing on one side. He was observing the humongous Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa with a slight frown on his face. Something was on his mind.

He stared at the blood-red crown of the Black Swamp Boa for a long while and then smacked his lips. An idea seemed to have struck his mind.

"This blood crown... looks pretty good, it might just be a decent ingredient. However, acquiring this will be difficult," Bu Fang muttered to himself.

Elder sister Mu was standing right next to Bu Fang. When she heard Bu Fang's muttering, she was immediately dumbfounded. As expected of a chef, he could think of cooking even when looking at the Black Swamp Boa.

All of the essence throughout the body of the Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa was gathered in its blood crown. Without a doubt, the blood crown was a highly nutritious ingredient and definitely its most valuable body part. However, this Black Swamp Boa was just about to undergo another molting and become a terrifying eighth grade spirit beast. Not just anyone could treat this spirit beast's body parts as an ingredient...

Bu Fang was naturally unaware of elder sister Mu's thoughts. He was busy staring at the Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa.

The fragrance was growing stronger and stronger. The aroma of the spirit herb seemed to possess some kind of magical power that caused their true energy to seethe with excitement and a faint coldness to spread throughout their bodies.

"This Ice Soul Monarch Lotus is not just any spirit herb. If it's properly handled, the cultivation level of the person who

consumes it will greatly increase. It's a valuable spirit herb that increase one's spirit energy... That's the reason why this Black Swamp Boa is yearning for the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus because it needs the spirit herb to achieve a breakthrough," elder sister Mu promptly explained when she noticed the perplexed expression on Bu Fang's face.

"This beast won't be able to snatch away our Ice Soul Monarch Lotus! With the elder around, this beast will not succeed! If Yu Fu's father wasn't heavily injured, this beast wouldn't... Hmph!" Ah Ni snorted while tightly clenching his fists. He was extremely infuriated by this Black Swamp Boa.

Yu Fu let out a sigh. The one who needed the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus the most was her. The head elder wanted to protect the lotus because of her father, a heavily injured seventh grade Battle-Saint who was also the leader of the serpent-men.

She did not anticipate that the blooming of the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus would attract so much attention. That Wu Yunbai appeared to be someone from the White Cloud Villa, and that mysterious chef... She did not know where he came from but his objective was definitely the Ice Soul monarch Lotus as well.

However... she could not let the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus fall into the hands of others because she needed to use the herb to treat her father. This was the objective of all of the serpent-men in the tribe.

Chapter 175: This Beast Is Going to Molt

The aroma of the herb wafting in the air was growing stronger and stronger to the point where many of the people present felt as if the true energy in their bodies were seething with excitement like boiling water, as though they were going to achieve a breakthrough at any point.

Many of the serpent-men immediately coiled their lower bodies into a ball and focused on their breathing. They breathed in the medicinal aroma and started cultivating on the spot.

As expected of the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus known as an essential spirit herb for achieving a breakthrough. It was no wonder a powerful seventh grade spirit beast like the Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa would be attracted by its aroma.

Rumble!

As the medicinal aroma grew even stronger, the Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa that had been quietly waiting slowly lifted up its body. Its humongous body was overlooking everything from high above while its eyes were filled with indifference.

The Black Swamp Boa was flicking its pitch-black tongue and emanating a foul smell while waiting for the blooming of the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus.

Everyone inside the tribe could not help but tense up as they gazed at this large serpent. The two Battle-Saints standing proudly in the sky were also releasing powerful auras to oppose the Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa.

Bu Fang's gaze was almost entirely focused on the faint blue lotus bud. Specks of light seemed to be drifting out from the lotus bud, like fireflies in the darkness. They were intersecting with the moonlight radiating from the sky above.

The spirit beasts in the surroundings all started roaring in a

menacing manner. Their auras were becoming restless in the wake of the Black Swamp Boa's movements.

The Black Swamp Boa straightened its body before slightly lowering its head and gradually inched closer toward the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus.

As the Black Swamp Boa drew closer, the two Battle-Saints felt that the pressure on them increased as well... As expected of the terrifying existence that experienced three moltings, the pressure emanating from the Black Swamp Boa was extremely powerful.

Wu Yunbai widened her eyes as well. Her lips slightly parted as she watched the confrontation in the sky. From the looks of it, the two Battle-Saints were at a disadvantage.

"Look! It's going to bloom!"

Someone suddenly cried out in alarm while pointing toward the lotus bud floating on the little pond with a shaking finger. As time passed by, the lotus bud was actually quivering.

As everyone held their breaths, they suddenly felt as if something in the air had broken free from its restraints and rushed out.

Waves of freezing spirit energy burst forth from above the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus, coming wave after wave like tidewater.

"It's starting!" Wu Yunbai's eyes immediately lit up with expectation as she stared at the lotus bud.

"The blooming of the Monarch Lotus brings about a fleeting beauty... The Ice Soul Monarch Lotus will definitely captivate anyone who witnesses its blooming..." Yu Fu muttered to herself while gazing at the lotus bud floating on the little pond with dreamy eyes.

As the first petal of the lotus quietly opened, it was accompanied with a surging wave of spirit energy. Thereafter, the second petal, then the third...

Each time a petal opened, a simulacrum of a gigantic lotus petal would appear in the air like a beautiful aurora.

Bu Fang's eyes were shining with amazement. A beautiful scene like this was hard to encounter. The blooming of seventh grade spirit herbs were all accompanied with strange sightings. Back then in the Fallen Phoenix Valley, the scene of a phoenix ascending into the sky during the blooming of the Phoenix Blood Herb was also extremely stunning.

The Ice Soul Monarch Lotus was a seventh grade spirit herb as well. The beauty of the current scene was not any inferior to the blooming of the Phoenix Blood Herb.

Hiss!

Rumble! The ground started shaking. Everyone's attention was withdrawn from the beautiful scene. That humongous Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa had finally lost its patience. As it flicked its forked tongue, its lantern-sized eyes were glittering with emotions.

Malevolence and killing intent were welling up in this large serpent's eyes.

Both of the Battle-Saints tensed up and let out battle cries.

Up in the sky, the beautiful scene produced by the blooming of the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus finally ended as well. Just like a flash in a pan, it was only a fleeting beauty.

The faint blue petals of lotus actually started wilting away in a rapid manner and revealed a gigantic lotus pod... This lotus pod was the real essence of the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus.

"Beast! How dare you!"

The elder of the serpent-men tribe let out a shout. He propelled himself into the sky with his serpentine lower body and a pitch-black spear appeared in his hand. The tip of the spear was gleaming with a cold sharpness.

The serpent was sliding forward toward the herb farm as the elder thrust his spear at the large beast. The serpent's objective was the lotus pod remaining after the wilting of the Monarch Lotus.

Buzz!

The serpent-man elder did not dare to be careless while facing this large serpent. He was using all of his strength in this attack. As a wave of true energy surged out from his body, a countless amount of spears started falling from the sky toward the Black Swamp Boa.

Black Swamp Boa's eyes shone with malevolence. Anyone who attempted to obstruct it from obtaining the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus... must die!

The scales all over the Black Swamp Boa's body were emanating a chilling light. With a swing of its gigantic tail, it managed to block all of the falling spears without receiving a single injury.

"It's so hard?!" The serpent-men elder's eyes immediately widened.

The human Battle-Saint let out a shout as well. He stepped on thin air and immediately rose into the sky. As he thrust his palm toward the large serpent, true energy gathered in his palm and turned into an enormous palm that was extremely detailed and lifelike.

Boom! The palm directly landed on the Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa's head and even caused its blood crown to slightly quiver...

Bu Fang's eyes suddenly widened and the corners of his mouth were twitching. He thought, "I hope that didn't ruin the blood crown, it's an ingredient that's hard to come by."

The Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa was enraged. As it opened its mouth and revealed its sharp teeth, it let out a screech and swung

its gigantic tail with a wide sweeping motion.

Rumble! The air seemed to have been torn apart with the sweep of its tail.

The human Battle-Saint immediately cried out in panic and used all of his strength to protect his body. With a loud noise, he was sent flying like a ball and instantly smashed into the ground.

The fate of the serpent-man elder was even more miserable. He was swallowed with a single bite by the Black Swamp Boa.

The head elder's eyes widened in shock. This beast... How could it be so strong?

Fortunately, the serpent-man elder soon managed to crawl out from the large serpent's mouth. However, his entire body was covered in blood...

The human Battle-Saint rose into the air once more. Filled with rage, both of the Battle-Saints released their true energy at the same time and two streams of dreadful true energy suddenly streaked toward the Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa.

The two Battle-Saints were truly enraged. Utilizing their true energy in such a reckless manner would result in severe damage toward the true energy vortex within their bodies. However, they were already long past the point of caring.

Surprisingly, the advance of the Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa was stopped in such a manner and it was forced to continuously back away.

As waves of bestial roars sounded out, the horde of spirit beasts started charging toward the tribe in a frenzied state.

The head elder of the serpent-men tribe gave an order and the magic array underneath the tribe suddenly started flashing with an intense light.

The spirit beasts charging toward the tribe collided into the

barrier and were all dazed by the collision. However, they could not break through the barrier.

For the time being, the situation entered a stalemate.

High above, the lantern-sized eyes of the Black Swamp Boa were focused on the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus. The large serpent let out a screech filled with frustration. These tiny ants before its eyes actually wanted to obstruct its breakthrough, unforgivable!

Thereafter, in front of the horrified gazes of the Battle-Saints, the blood crown of the Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa suddenly emitted a crimson light and the head of the Black Swamp Boa started splitting apart right from the middle...

"This beast is attempting to molt by force?! Be careful!" Wu Yunbai hurriedly cried out in alarm.

Chapter 176: Running Under The Moonlight While Holding a Kitchen Knife

The Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa was molting by force?!

This beast had gone insane! Just like humans when attempting a cultivation breakthrough, spirit beasts needed to find a quiet location when molting. Getting disturbed in the middle of the process might result in mental aberration.

Spirit beasts could suffer from mental aberration like humans as well. No one anticipated that the desperate struggle of the two Battle-Saints to protect the spirit herb would actually cause this beast to attempt its fourth molting. It was going all-in in a desperate gambit!

For the sake of obtaining the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus, this Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa had completely thrown all caution to the wind.

However... even though the Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa was running the risk of suffering from mental aberration, it also meant that its cultivation level would dramatically increase and might even infinitely approach the cultivation level of an eighth grade spirit beast.

Eighth grade... was a really terrifying realm. If this beast advanced into eighth grade, everyone present might really perish.

The barrier would be simply unable to withstand the attack of an eighth grade spirit beast.

The head elder fell into a state of panic. If the Black Swamp Boa succeeded in molting, they would really be finished...

Wu Yunbai's eyes revealed a trace of panic as well. She managed to plan out everything but did not anticipate that this beast would actually make such a choice. The serpent had simply gone mad!

Bang! Bang!

As two loud noises rang out, both of the Battle-Saints were knocked several steps backward in mid-air. The expressions on their faces turned ugly.

The forehead of the Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa split apart and a layer of skin slowly peeled off. A wave of spirit energy started surging, as if a violent storm was coming.

The intense pain caused the Black Swamp Boa to scream in agony. Its humongous body continuously thrashed about while its tail violently slammed onto the barrier, causing the entire barrier to shake for a moment.

The head elder's heart was trembling along with the shaking of the barrier...

"Please hold on..." The head elder silently prayed.

However, despite his prayer, the intensity of the barrier's shaking grew even further. The ferocity of the spirit beasts' attack on the barrier grew as well. Every single spirit beast became extremely menacing.

"Damn it! This must not be allowed to continue... Otherwise, once the barrier is broken, the tribe will be completely destroyed and everyone here will die," Wu Yunbai thought. Her eyes flashed as she searched for a solution.

Meanwhile, Bu Fang was observing his surroundings. He discovered that the eyes of the people around him were filled with terror. Evidently, they also understood the terrifying consequence of letting the large serpent succeed in molting.

Could the Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa really succeed in molting?

It was actually difficult to predict because the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus was just sitting nearby. This beast only needed to swallow the lotus pod left after the wilting of the Monarch Lotus to

successfully advance into eighth grade.

By then, this infuriated serpent would definitely not show any mercy to these people for obstructing its advancement.

"Master Ah Wu! Catch this!"

As Wu Yunbai took a step forward, she rose into the air as if she was light as a feather. With a flash of light, a longsword appeared in her hand.

The blade of the longsword was gleaming with flowing lights. Every ray of light appeared to have originated from the inside of the blade.

"The Cloud Rising Sword? Young miss... Isn't that the semi-divine weapon that the master gave you?"

The eyes of the human Battle-Saint called Ah Wu suddenly widened in astonishment. His entire body was trembling in excitement as he subconsciously caught the glowing longsword.

A semi-divine weapon... That was an actual semi-divine weapon!

Furthermore, it was a semi-divine weapon listed in the Celestial Arcanum Sect's Weapon Records!

The Battle-Saint was so agitated that he almost burst into tears. He was actually able to hold a semi-divine weapon and use it in combat... It was worth it even if he died in the next moment!

With the semi-divine weapon in his hand, the aura of the Battle-Saint suddenly changed. He became extremely confident. As his true energy filled up the longsword, he rose into the air like a god of war. His entire body appeared to be radiating light.

Compared to before, this Battle-Saint's arrogance suddenly increased by a large chunk.

"With a semi-divine weapon in my hand, the world is my oyster! You're just a mere snake! Now, die!"

With a shout, the blade of the sword suddenly flashed. A barrage

of sword energy poured out and filled everyone's field of vision. They gathered and turned into a massive longsword.

Its target was the Black Swamp Boa!

The malevolence in the Black Swamp Boa's eyes suddenly dramatically soared. With a screech, a wave of spirit energy rushed out of its body and even its skin started shaking as well. The sword energy brutally shredded its shedded skin.

This was the shedded skin of a seventh grade spirit beast. If made into armor... it could even stop the full-strength attack of a Battle-King. However, it was completely torn into pieces by the sword energy.

The horridness of the sword energy could clearly be seen. Semi-divine weapons... deserved their reputation indeed.

This sword stroke could literally be called earth-shattering. The Black Swamp Boa felt a powerful sense of danger as well. It opened its mouth wide and roared toward the longsword in the air. Then, it suddenly charged forward with lightning fast speed.

Rumble!

Blood sailed through the air. The part of the large serpent where the skin had already shed was actually cut open and blood was spurting out.

However, the eyes of the Battle-Saint suddenly widened. He could feel a burst of dreadful pressure rushing toward him. Then, a shadowy figure shot out from the serpent's mouth and instantly struck his body.

Ah Wu was uncontrollably vomiting blood as he sailed through the air. He was nearly sliced in two just now. If not for the enhancement from the semi-divine weapon, he could have already perished.

Nonetheless, Ah Wu was still severely injured. He fell onto the ground and the Cloud Rising Sword landed a distance away from

him.

Wu Yunbai, the head elder, and everyone else were all stunned...

Did he not have the upper hand? How did he get defeated in an instant instead? What happened to slaying this beast? What happened to his imperious presence from before?

The serpent-man Battle-Saint's expression turned dark as well. He thought, "Almost dying to a mere beast even with a semi-divine weapon... What a disgrace to all Battle-Saints!"

The humongous body of the Black Swamp Boa fell onto the ground with a loud noise. A snake, more fearsome than the Black Swamp Boa and a dozen times smaller, was coiled into a ball in mid-air and flicking its tongue. It then flew through the air in lightning fast speed toward the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus floating in the pond.

This was the true form of the Black Swamp Boa. Feeling threatened by the semi-divine weapon, it had no choice but to reveal its true form.

It was already more than capable of trouncing all of its enemies blocking its way. Soon, it would obtain the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus, there was no one around who could stop it from becoming an eighth grade spirit beast anymore!

By then, it would become the overlord-class spirit beast of the entire Illusory Spirit Swamp, the over-class spirit beast that stood at the top of the food chain.

The glow emanating from the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus was so beautiful that it was suffocating. The speed of the Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa was lightning fast and its eyes were filled with desire.

It was getting nearer and nearer!

It would soon obtain the spirit herb of its dreams!

It would soon become an eighth grade spirit beast and look down upon the entire region!

The head elder and the others were filled with utter despair. They never expected the two Battle-Saints would actually fail to stop the seventh grade Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa...

Once the beast obtained the spirit herb, the entire serpent-men tribe would fall into ruins.

Just when everyone had fallen into despair, the sound of soft footsteps rang out. A figure slowly stepped out from the crowd and walked in the direction of the Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa.

Wu Yunbai's eyes widened in incredulity as she watched the young man slowly walking forward.

"What is he doing?!" Wu Yunbai was filled with bewilderment. Why was a mere Battle-King stepping forward at such a moment? Was he seeking his own death?

A smile appeared on Bu Fang's lips as he looked at the Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa. A wisp of green smoke encircled his hand and a pitch-black kitchen knife appeared in his palm.

As Bu Fang held the kitchen knife, his walking pace slowly changed into a jog. Then, his speed gradually became faster and he started sprinting.

In the darkness of the night, a young man holding a kitchen knife was running under the moonlight.

Chapter 177: Compared to the Aura of a Dragon, the Aura of a Snake Is Nothing!

"Has he gone mad?"

Everyone was staring at the knife-wielding figure charging straight toward the Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa, with blank expressions on their faces. Was he going to oppose the Black Swamp Boa with his own strength? Was he planning to snatch the seed pod of the Monarch Lotus from the mouth of a spirit beast that was infinitely close to becoming eighth grade?

That was simply deranged and foolhardy!

That was the thought on everyone's mind at the moment. If Bu Fang was a seventh grade Battle-Saint, they might consider his behavior as worthy of praise. However, Bu Fang was merely a fifth grade Battle-King. From their point of view, his current behavior was simply stupid beyond belief!

A fifth grade Battle-King was simply a feeble ant before the Black Swamp Boa that defeated two Battle-Saints at once. Perhaps with a single swipe of its tail, this young man would be turned into dust!

Wu Yunbai let out a sigh and helplessly shook her head. She originally admired Bu Fang because he was a chef capable of making elixir cuisines. Such a chef was hard to find even within the White Cloud Villa. However, even though this young man's culinary skill was pretty good... his intelligence was worrying.

Why was he courting death by charging toward the Black Swamp Boa? Even if he really needed that lotus pod, he should first assess his own capability. Attempting to achieve something that exceeded one's capability was no better than committing suicide.

Elder sister Mu was bewildered as well. Before she could even react, Bu Fang had already charged toward the Black Swamp Boa. When she finally realized the situation, it was already too late for

her to stop Bu Fang.

Ah Ni was stunned for a moment and then his eyes ignited with boiling hot fervor!

"Damn it! This friend has the guts to charge out there even though he's only a Battle-King! How could a Battle-Emperor like me cower inside this place?! I will not allow this!"

Ah Ni let out an angry roar and swung his tail. He was planning to follow suit as well.

However, before Ah Ni could even get far, he was struck in the face by the head elder's tail.

"Stop right there! Go stand at the back! What do you think you're doing?! Do you think it's the time for you to behave recklessly?!" the head elder angrily shouted. Ah Ni's complexion immediately turned ashen pale from fright. He lowered his head and went back to his original position.

However, his eyes were still filled with frustration. When he looked toward Bu Fang, his gaze was already filled with reverence.

The role model of our generation!

He shall be honored even in death!

The appearance of the Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa was even more sinister after becoming much smaller. Its aura also became very ferocious. Its speed was so fast that everyone sucked in a breath of cold air.

It sailed through the air like an arrow seeking to pierce through everything.

Suddenly, the pupils of the Black Swamp Boa constricted. Within its field of vision, an ant-like human was actually heading straight in its direction.

The aura of the human was so weak... that it did not even have the slightest interest to deal with him.

"Is this human stupid? The two from earlier were very powerful but they still nearly died. The aura of this human is clearly much weaker... Is he coming here to die?" This was the actual inner thoughts of the Black Swamp Boa at the moment.

"Since that's the case... I'll just play with him for a while."

However, was Bu Fang really acting without thinking? No... he was not a fool!

While Bu Fang was charging toward the Black Swamp Boa, the true energy inside his body was slowly circulating. As the true energy seethed within his body, it filled his limbs and his aura reached its peak.

In the midst of running, the pitch-black kitchen knife in Bu Fang's hand was also glowing. The intensity of the light was not that strong at the start, but was slowly becoming brighter!

In the end, the kitchen knife was shining intensely!

Rumble!

As Bu Fang took another step forward, the ground slightly shook for a moment. The appearance of the antiquated kitchen knife in his hand had completely transformed. It changed from its shabby appearance from before into a large golden kitchen knife. Light was emanating from the knife in all directions. Its intensity was so bright that it nearly blinded everyone.

Gosh... What the hell was that thing?

All of the serpent-men felt a dreadful pressure instantly engulfing them. It was a horrifying feeling that seemed to have originated from the depths of their bloodline. Their bodies started to tremble and their expressions were filled with horror!

The head elder was shaking like a leaf. He had never reacted in such a frightened manner before. Even when facing the Serpentine Sovereign for the first time, he did not feel this afraid...

This sort of fear was not from the crushing difference in their strength but originated from the depths of their bloodline.

With loud splashes, the serpent-men prostrated themselves on the ground. The trembling and the sudden palpitation forced them to kneel.

Wu Yunbai's eyes widened in astonishment. Her mouth was wide open as if an apple was stuck in there while her face was filled with disbelief... "This... What's going on? Why are the serpent-men prostrating on the ground?"

Ding ding ding!

A distance away, the Cloud Rising Sword that landed on the ground suddenly started shaking as well. Wu Yunbai who shared a telepathic bond with the sword suddenly felt a suffocating feeling for a moment. She could feel a sense of fear emanating from the Cloud Rising Sword.

As a semi-divine weapon, the Cloud Rising Sword naturally possessed sentience. How could a sword with sentience be afraid of an ordinary object?

Wu Yunbai raised her head once more and stared at the young man holding the golden kitchen knife in the distance...

That kitchen knife...

"Is that kitchen knife really a semi-divine weapon?! Are you kidding me? Which accursed tool-making master produced this semi-divine kitchen knife? Did he not realize that he was wasting valuable materials?"

Wu Yunbai was furious! The most infuriating part was that she sensed that the kitchen knife seemed to be superior to her Cloud Rising Sword!

The semi-divine weapon of the White Cloud Villa was inferior to a kitchen knife... How humiliating.

Bu Fang's running speed became faster and faster. Since the kitchen knife became much larger, he could only carry it over his shoulder.

At first, the Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa did not take Bu Fang seriously. However, when the pitch-black kitchen knife in his hand started glowing and transformed into a large golden kitchen knife, the Black Swamp Boa was dumbfounded!

Its body suddenly stopped as if it was frozen solid by the ice from the polar regions. It completely lost its ferocity from before!

Roar!

A dragon's roar surged out from the golden kitchen knife and immediately rushed into the air, as if a divine dragon was roaming the skies.

Boom... All of the serpent-men prostrated their bodies even lower toward the ground. It felt as if the blood in their bodies were boiling. Good heavens... A dragon's roar! This kitchen knife... was made from the bones of a dragon!

"Is there any humanity left in this world? A dragon bone... kitchen knife? What a waste of precious materials!"

This was the inner thoughts of everyone there. Forging a kitchen knife with the bones of a dragon... was indeed quite wasteful.

However, Bu Fang did not care about what they thought... This kitchen knife was part of his God of Cooking set. So what if the knife was made from the bones of a dragon?

Bu Fang stopped right in front of the seed pod of the Monarch Lotus and took a few breaths.

A screeching sound came from above. The Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa was still flying toward him but the intimidating pressure from before was gone.

Compared to the aura of a dragon, its aura... was nothing!

Bu Fang stood right in front of the Monarch Lotus and watched as the Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa rapidly approached. He slowly wrapped his hands around the handle of the kitchen knife... and then suddenly swung the knife.

The kitchen knife glowing with a dazzling light drew a beautiful arc in the air before making an intimate contact with the Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa.

Chapter 178: The Tribe Leader... Is Saved

Bang!

The back of the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife directly struck the body of the rapidly approaching Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa. This seventh grade spirit beast was immediately sent flying away like a ball.

While everyone watched on in amazement as the high and mighty spirit beast violently slammed into the ground. The impact caused the ground around that area to collapse.

Bu Fang's arms were slightly trembling. He winced in pain as he sucked in a breath of cold air. The serpent was tougher than he expected. The flesh on his palm was almost torn off from the impact.

The Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa that was sent flying by Bu Fang suddenly rose into the air once more. It flicked its tongue at Bu Fang with eyes filled with malice.

Bu Fang heaved the kitchen knife over his shoulder and raised his eyebrows as he gave the Black Swamp Boa a glance. Then, he slowly walked toward the serpent.

At the same time, the spirit beasts around the tribe had all stopped attacking the barrier. They were all prostrating on the ground. The aura emanating from the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife was completely restraining their bodies.

Bu Fang slowly walked toward the serpent with one hand holding the handle of the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife and the back of the knife resting on his shoulder.

The Black Swamp Boa was somewhat flinching while fearfully staring at Bu Fang. As a serpent spirit beast, its veins were flowing with the bloodline of the dragon race. Each time the Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa underwent molting, it was further refining its

racial bloodline and advancing its development into a dragon. Therefore, when facing the actual aura of a dragon, it could not even think of resisting.

Rustle...

The Black Swamp Boa was writhing in pain as its skin continued to fall off. The pain experienced during its molting was not something comprehensible by humans.

The molting process had already reached its last moments... Since the Black Swamp Boa had not swallowed the seed pod of the Monarch Lotus, it was clearly doomed to fail. As a result, it would suffer a severe injury that would take a few hundred years to recover from.

The Black Swamp Boa originally thought the appearance of the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus was its opportunity. However, it never anticipated a young man with a Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife would appear. Who could expect such a twist of fate?

Bu Fang brandished the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife and suddenly pushed the knife toward the Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa. A faint golden glow circulated on the surface of the kitchen knife and scattered like a wisp of smoke into the Black Swamp Boa's nostrils.

The body of the Black Swamp Boa was trembling. It lost all courage to resist... This was due to the effect of racial bloodline suppression.

Bu Fang indifferently gave the Black Swamp Boa a glance. With the presence of the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife, it was completely unable to resist. The Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife could only mildly suppress ordinary seventh grade spirit beasts but possessed absolute suppression effect on spirit beasts like the Black Swamp Boa and Wandering Dragon Cow because their evolution goal was becoming dragons. Thus, they were naturally powerless against the aura of a dragon.

Splurt!

As the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife swung downward, blood immediately splattered everywhere.

Bu Fang expressionlessly watched as the Black Swamp Boa writhed in its own pool of blood...

"On account of the difficulty of your cultivation, I'll only sever your blood crown today. Get lost," Bu Fang said.

The Black Swamp Boa hissed back in response while flicking its pitch-black tongue. Its eyes were filled with lament and frustration. However, after looking at the golden kitchen knife on Bu Fang's shoulder... it chose to back off in the end.

After giving a final hiss, the Black Swamp Boa wriggled its body and swiftly slithered into the depths of the Illusory Spirit Swamp. Within an instant, it disappeared without a trace.

After losing their leader, the other spirit beasts all retreated as well. In an instant, they were completely gone, like a receding tide.

Bu Fang let out a soft sigh and staggered for a moment. The Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife in his hand grew dim all of a sudden. As the glow gradually faded, it regained its pitch-black appearance. In addition, it turned into a wisp of green smoke and burrowed into his wrist.

The true energy expenditure of the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife was simply too much. Even though he possessed more true energy as a fifth grade Battle-King compared to back when he was only a fourth grade Battle-Spirit, slicing off the blood crown of the Black Swamp Boa was his limit.

With his current level of true energy, Bu Fang was unable to slay the Black Swamp Boa. The scales of the Black Swamp Boa were too tough. He would need to expend a large amount of true energy to cut through its skin. However, at the moment he was unable to provide the amount of true energy to utilize the Dragon Bone

Kitchen Knife.

After regaining his balance, Bu Fang walked toward the blood crown lying on the ground.

This was the actual blood crown of the Black Swamp Boa. Even though the other blood crown on its larger body looked pretty good as well, that was not real. All of the serpent's essence was compressed into this blood crown that was only the size of two fists.

After losing its supply of spirit energy from the Black Swamp, the blood crown gradually hardened. However, it did not become too hard and retained a certain softness.

After seeing the dense amount of spirit and vitality energy emanating from the blood crown, Bu Fang broke into a smile. He was pleased with his decision of cutting off the blood crown. It was an outstanding ingredient.

After putting away the blood crown into the system's storage space, Bu Fang turned around and walked toward the seed pod of the Monarch Lotus.

The Ice Soul Monarch Lotus had completely wilted. Its beauty only lasted for an instant. Even though it was astonishingly beautiful, it only left a moment of brilliance in the world before wilting. After it wilted, a faint blue pod filled with jade-like seeds was left.

Bu Fang took out the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife and sliced off the seed pod. He then walked toward the others while holding the seed pod of the Monarch Lotus in his hand.

Everyone else was still in a state of bewilderment. Some of them did not even know what had just happened. Why did that high and mighty Black Swamp Boa retreat all of a sudden? What happened to that ferocious stampede of spirit beasts?

"You... You drove off the Blood Crown Black Swamp Boa?!" Wu

Yunbai exclaimed while pointing a finger at Bu Fang. She was filled with disbelief. While everyone else was despairing from this seemingly inescapable disaster, a chef from god knows where resolved the situation using... a kitchen knife.

"This is the seed pod of the Monarch Lotus." Bu Fang did not respond to Wu Yunbai. Instead, he turned toward the head elder of the serpent-men tribe who was still nervously prostrating on the ground.

The head elder only looked up after hearing Bu Fang's words. When he saw the faint blue lotus pod, his eyes immediately lit up.

"That's right, that's the seed pod of the Monarch Lotus. This young master..." The head elder hesitated for a moment.

If Bu Fang was still that unknown chef from before who only knew how to cook, the head elder would have openly snatched the lotus pod back. However, he was hesitating... If he had to prostate whenever the kitchen knife was out, how was he going to snatch anything?

"Take it, aren't you going to use this to treat someone? Go see if it works. There's plenty of seeds here, so just leave some for me when you're done," Bu Fang said as he tossed the lotus pod toward the head elder.

The head elder was stunned for a moment as he subconsciously caught the lotus pod.

"Young master, you... Alright, please come with me." The head elder gave Bu Fang a serious look and then beckoned Bu Fang to follow him.

Yu Fu and the others were sobbing with joy. They thought they were going to lose the seed pod of the Monarch Lotus. They never anticipated that Bu Fang would actually hand over the seed pod to them. In that case... her father would be saved!

With the seeds of the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus, there was hope for

treating their bedridden tribe leader.

As the group slowly proceeded on, the head elder instructed a few of his subordinates to tidy up the devastated herb farm before leading Bu Fang and the others through a group of buildings.

The group soon reached a slightly run-down building.

Even though the building was short and run-down, it was much more luxurious compared to the residences of the other serpent-men.

The head elder led Bu Fang, Yu Fu as well as the uninvited Wu Yunbai into a room. The interior of the room suddenly became somewhat crowded.

The gorgeous serpent-woman sitting inside suddenly got up and looked toward them in surprise.

"Mother, there's hope for father!" The moment Yu Fu entered the room, she immediately threw herself into that gorgeous serpent-woman's embrace.

The gorgeous serpent-woman was stunned for a moment. She subconsciously turned toward the elderly head elder and saw the latter waving a faint blue lotus pod with a smile on his face.

"The Monarch Lotus has bloomed and its seed pod is here... The tribe leader is saved."

Chapter 179: Blood Crown Wandering

Dragon Beef Congee

"Head... Head elder, is there really hope for Yu Feng?" After blanking out for a moment, tears suddenly trickled down the cheeks of the gorgeous serpent-woman. She covered her mouth and started sobbing.

There was finally hope for her husband. The former strongest warrior of the serpent-men tribe was about to return.

"The seeds of the Monarch Lotus will definitely be able to treat Yu Feng," the head elder replied as he gave her a glance.

Bu Fang and Wu Yunbai remained silent and quietly watched on from the side.

The head elder solemnly raised up the lotus pod. As he directed true energy into his palms, a marble-like seed was sucked out from the seed pod. The seed was extremely crystal clear, as if it was carved from a piece of jade.

Everyone within the room was somewhat enthralled by the plentiful spirit energy and aroma that instantly filled the entire room.

As Bu Fang breathed in the aroma, his eyes shone brightly as well. Judging from its spirit energy and aroma, the seeds of the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus were indeed qualified enough to be used together with the Phoenix Blood Herb and the Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit.

Holding the seed in his hand, the head elder suddenly clenched his fist tightly together. He directed true energy into his palm and the seed was crushed into powder. As he opened his hand, the seed had turned into a puff of powder and was hovering above his palm.

With a gentle wave of his hand, the puff of powder drifted into the comatose serpent-man's mouth.

Yu Fu's eyes were sparkling with hope as she stared at the serpent-man who ingested the puff of powder.

After ingesting the powder, the serpent-man's complexion immediately started glowing. A faint blue light flashed past... and then nothing else happened.

Hmm? Was that all?

Bu Fang was stunned for a moment. He turned and looked toward the head elder. After using up a single seed... it seemed like their treatment plan did not work at all?

What was going on? It was not just Bu Fang who was startled by the current situation, even the head elder was stunned. According to his assumption, the serpent-man should have woken up after ingesting the seed of the Monarch Lotus.

Refusing to give up, the head elder crushed another lotus seed and sent the powder into the serpent-man's mouth. However, just like the first seed, the serpent-man's complexion flashed blue for a moment and then nothing else happened.

Each and every single seed of the Monarch Lotus was extremely valuable. By all rights, the serpent-man should have woken up after consuming two seeds in a row...

Clenching his teeth together, the head elder crushed another seed with his trembling hand.

With only eight seeds in total, using up three seeds within such a short while was definitely an extravagance.

However... the serpent-man remained unconscious.

At this point, the head elder's lips started trembling. He was planning to crush another seed but was stopped by Wu Yunbai who could not stand by and watch any longer.

"Don't waste any more of the seeds. If this remedy was effective, he should have already woken up after the first seed. Three seeds is

already more than enough. Any more... would just be a waste," Wu Yunbai said with a somewhat cold voice.

The head elder dejectedly relaxed the hand that was holding the seed. His face was ashen pale from the loss of hope.

Meanwhile, the gorgeous serpent-woman and Yu Fu were already on the verge of breaking down. The hope that had just arisen was ruthlessly crushed.

Wu Yunbai walked toward the bedridden serpent-man. A cloud of true energy left her hand and enveloped his chest. She closed her eyes as if she was sensing the condition of his body.

"He's still unconscious because of a severe loss of vitality energy. No matter how many of the Monarch Lotus' seeds are used, it will only be a waste. Even though the seeds are capable of providing him with spirit energy and enhancing his healing capability, they're unable to replenish his vitality energy. You're only wasting the seeds like this," Wu Yunbai directly said.

She withdrew her hand and looked back at the others.

The head elder let out a sigh while the eyes of both Yu Fu and her mother were bloodshot. With their hope dashed, it was already a miracle that they did not burst into tears.

Vitality energy? Bu Fang narrowed his eyes as countless thoughts flashed across his mind.

Thereafter, Bu Fang stepped forward and slowly walked toward the serpent-man. He stopped next to the bed and stared at serpent-man's face for a long while.

After looking for a while, Bu Fang turned toward Wu Yunbai and asked, "Are you really sure that he's still unconscious because of a loss of vitality energy?"

Wu Yunbai was suddenly speechless. When she noticed Bu Fang staring at the bedridden serpent-man for a such a long time, she thought he had discovered something new. Contrary to her

expectation, he still had to ask her in the end. Then, what was he staring at for such a long time?!

"Members of the White Cloud Villa are proficient in all sorts of miscellaneous skills and learning medical skills is considered compulsory for us. Therefore, you don't need to doubt my diagnosis," Wu Yunbai haughtily said with confidence.

Bu Fang nodded. Ignoring Wu Yunbai who was proudly thrusting her chest out, he turned and looked toward the head elder. He held out his hand and said, "Since the seeds are useless, give me the remaining seeds."

Without saying anything, the head elder immediately handed the seed pod over to Bu Fang. With a flash of light, the seed pod was put into the system's storage space.

After storing the seed pod, Bu Fang turned toward the gorgeous serpent-woman who was quietly weeping and asked, "Do you have a cooking stove here?"

The gorgeous serpent-woman gave Bu Fang a puzzled glance and subconsciously pointed toward the back of the room.

Bu Fang nodded and walked toward the rundown cooking stove in the corner.

There was a rice vat next to the cooking stove. When he removed the lid, he discovered that there was not even a single rice grain inside. The living conditions of the serpent-men tribe were indeed extremely tough.

After cleaning up the pot, Bu Fang actually started a fire and got busy around the cooking stove.

Wu Yunbai was at first surprised by Bu Fang's actions but she immediately thought of something. Her eyes slightly widened and started shining brightly.

"Is he going to make an elixir cuisine and use that to treat this serpent-man? However... is it really possible to replenish vitality

energy with an elixir cuisine?" Wu Yunbai muttered in disbelief.

Losing vitality energy was actually quite a common problem. The vitality energy of people with weak constitution tended to deplete all the time. However, when the loss of vitality energy reached a certain level, the problem was much more severe.

Bu Fang took out some rice from the system's storage space. This was the same rice used to cook the Egg-Fried Rice sold within the store. Every single grain was plump. Bu Fang originally intended to use the rice to cook a meal for himself. However, he never got the chance to use them while he was inside the Illusory Spirit Swamp all this time. Now, it was time to put them to good use.

After washing the rice, he left them inside the pot to boil.

Bu Fang gathered some true energy that he just recovered and brought out the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife. With a flash of light, the blood crown appeared in his other hand.

"This is... the blood crown of that Black Swamp Boa?!" Wu Yunbai covered her mouth while her face was filled with bewilderment. "This fellow... did he obtain this thing earlier on?"

In that case, the Black Swamp Boa must be really depressed right now. It gained nothing and even lost its own blood crown!

Nonetheless, if the blood crown was used... this might just work. The essence of the Black Swamp Boa was located inside its blood crown and most of its vitality energy was accumulated there as well. An elixir cuisine made from the blood crown might just be effective.

Bu Fang carefully sliced off a small piece of the blood crown using the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife. After dicing the small piece of blood crown, he put the rest of the blood crown away. With a flash of light, a fat and tender piece of the Wandering Dragon Cow's meat appeared in his hand.

After dicing the Wandering Dragon Cow's meat as well, he mixed

both the meat together and poured them into the pot.

As the lid of the pot was removed, everyone in the room was astonished by the refreshing aroma of the rice that accompanied the rising steam.

Both Yu Fu and her mother turned their heads and looked in Bu Fang's direction. They were somewhat baffled when they saw Bu Fang was actually making congee.

Yu Fu understood Bu Fang far better than her mother. When she realized that Bu Fang might be making an elixir cuisine, her eyes glimmered with hope once more.

There might still be hope for her father!

As white bubbles frothed inside the pot, the swelling rice grains were emanating a mellow aroma.

After pouring the mixture of the blood crown and Wandering Dragon Cow's meat into the pot, Bu Fang's expression started becoming serious as well. His true energy had not completely recovered yet, so he did not know whether he could last until this elixir cuisine was fully completed.

Fortunately, the process of making the congee was much simpler than his other elixir cuisines. Therefore, his current amount of true energy might be enough.

"I might need to prepare some snacks that could help me recover my true energy in the future... Otherwise, it'll be annoying whenever my true energy runs out," Bu Fang muttered to himself. His forehead was covered with fine beads of sweat.

However, the elixir cuisine was still completed in the end.

The white grains of rice were reddish in color while dark-red pieces of beef floated on the surface of the congee. A rich fragrance and vitality energy was hovering above the congee.

Without any doubt, a congee made with the meat from two

seventh grade spirit beasts was extraordinary.

After Bu Fang ladled the congee—which was just enough for a single bowl—into a worn-out ceramic bowl, he walked toward the others who were already astounded while holding the congee that was strongly exuding vitality energy.

Chapter 180: Look for Me in the Imperial City of the Light Wind Empire

Hiss!

A faint hissing sound could be heard. As Bu Fang held the bowl of congee in his hands, the vitality energy hovering above it appeared to have turned into a small snake. It was continuously swimming around in the air and intermingling with the aroma encircling it.

"This... this is an elixir cuisine?!" Wu Yunbai exclaimed in disbelief.

Bu Fang gave her a puzzled glance. He could not understand why she was so surprised. Was making a bowl of elixir cuisine... really that strange?

Of course, there was nothing strange about making an elixir cuisine. Wu Yunbai was only surprised because Bu Fang easily made the elixir cuisine even when the amount of true energy in his body was in a depleted state.

The working condition was extremely horrible as well. That cooking stove... Wu Yunbai had never seen a cooking stove in such a terrible state before. It was doubtful whether this cooking stove could be used to cook ordinary dishes, let alone elixir cuisines that had harsher requirements and a higher difficulty.

Bu Fang brought the steaming bowl of congee over to the serpent-man. Yu Fu and her mother were staring at him with eyes filled with hope while the head elder's gaze was filled with gratitude.

Bu Fang's elixir cuisine was their only chance left.

Bu Fang gave the serpent-man a glance and went into a daze for a moment. He then turned toward Yu Fu's mother and said, "Feed this to him."

The serpent-man was her husband after all. Besides, Bu Fang did not have the habit of feeding another male...

Yu Fu's mother carefully took the bowl from Bu Fang. This was her last hope.

As she scooped a spoonful of congee using a worn out duck spoon, a small snake made of vitality energy encircled the handle of the spoon like a vine entwining a branch.

With a careful expression, Yu Fu's mother gently blew on the spoonful of congee in order to cool the piping hot congee, even though this level of hotness would not be able to hurt the serpent-man at all.

As she fed the serpent-man a spoonful of congee, the congee entered his stomach and turned into a small snake. It instantly spread throughout his body and nourished every part of it.

The turbulent spirit energy within the Wandering Dragon Cow's meat plus the vitality energy from the Black Swamp Boa's blood crown immediately caused the serpent-man's cold body to heat up like he was thrown into a fire.

The eyes of Yu Fu's mother suddenly widened and her hand holding the bowl of congee started trembling as well. She suppressed the agitation in her heart and fed the serpent-man spoon by spoon.

As Bu Fang watched this scene, a barely noticeable smile appeared on his lips.

It really worked?! Wu Yunbai was astonished. To be able to produce an elixir cuisine in such harsh conditions, how formidable was this young man's culinary skill? Even the chefs back at the White Cloud Villa might be inferior to him.

The head elder finally let out a sigh of relief while Yu Fu's eyes were filled with joy.

After finishing half the bowl of congee, Yu Fu's mother suddenly

felt her husband's body slightly trembled for a moment. The slight tremble caused her heart to quiver in response. There was finally a reaction from her husband!

Subsequently, under everyone's attentive gaze, the eyes of that serpent-man, Yu Feng, slowly opened. His eyes were filled with confusion.

The mood of the serpent-men family was finally turned from sadness to happiness. Bu Fang was feeling a little happy for them as well.

However, Bu Fang was more happy about finally completing his objective for entering the Illusory Spirit Swamp. He managed to obtain a satisfactory ingredient, the seed pod and seeds of a seventh grade spirit herb, the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus.

"Spirit herb harvesting completed. Next, the return teleportation will now begin. Teleportation preparation in progress..."

Just when Bu Fang was quietly watching the joyful reunion of the serpent-men family, the system's solemn voice suddenly resounded in his mind.

Bu Fang was slightly startled for a moment. He almost forgot about returning home.

"Teleportation preparation is completed. The return teleportation will begin in 3, 2, 1..."

As the system finished counting down, a white speck of light appeared above Bu Fang's head. It started to rapidly form lines of light in the air and soon finished drawing a magic array.

Wu Yunbai was the first to notice the strange phenomenon happening around Bu Fang. The magic array hovering in the air made her eyes widen from surprise...

"What is he going to do this time? This magic array... it's really complex!" Wu Yunbai thought. It was a magic array that she had never seen before.

The serpent-men family noticed the commotion as well. Yu Fu opened her mouth and asked, "Our benefactor, what's going on? Are... are you leaving already?"

As Bu Fang sensed the magic array above his head was about to be completed, he suddenly recalled something important.

He went into a daze for a moment before he turned toward Yu Fu and said, "Erm... Miss, there's something else that I need to inform you. As your father's constitution is too weak, I only provided enough vitality energy within the Wandering Dragon Beef Congee to sustain him for half a month."

What?! Yu Fu and her father, Yu Feng, who was getting up from the bed, was startled as well.

This bowl of congee will only provide him enough vitality energy for half a month? Doesn't that mean he would revert back to his weakened state after half a month?

"Our benefactor, isn't there any other solution?" Yu Feng anxiously asked. Since there was finally a possibility of treating him, he definitely had to grasp the chance. He felt a sense of shame for letting his wife and daughter worried about him while he lay in bed all the time.

Yu Fu looked toward Bu Fang with hopeful eyes as well.

She firmly believed that Bu Fang could treat her father!

As Bu Fang pondered for a moment, a breeze started to encircle him and gradually grew stronger.

"Within half a month, come to the Light Wind Empire's imperial city and look for Fang Fang's Little Store. Once you're there, I have a way of helping you," Bu Fang said.

Half a month, Light Wind Empire's imperial city, Fang Fang's Little Store!

Yu Fu deeply memorized these words in her heart.

"Hey! Don't go just yet! The seeds of the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus are still in your hands, I want to trade with you!"

Wu Yunbai finally recovered from her surprise. "Looks like this Bu Fang is planning to teleport away... But, activating a teleportation array on the spot, is there a need for him to be so showy?!"

"Hmm? What? This woman wants to make a trade for the seeds of the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus?" Bu Fang thought.

He suddenly raised his eyebrows for a moment and then expressionlessly looked toward Wu Yunbai. The latter's voice was already starting to be overwhelmed by the deafening sound of the wind.

"If you want the lotus seeds, come look for me in the imperial city," Bu Fang coolly replied.

As his words ended, the magic array shrunk and disappeared along with Bu Fang.

Looking at the empty room, Wu Yunbai was furious! She could not believe Bu Fang actually teleported away on the spot... She thought, "Doesn't he know that people who show off like this will get struck by lightning?!"

Within Wu Yunbai's memories, only those teleportation array spirit talismans made by array masters were similar to the magic array that appeared earlier on.

"Hmph! The imperial city of the Light Wind Empire? I will definitely find you!" Wu Yunbai muttered.

Yu Fu had never gone to the imperial city before. In fact, she had never even left the tribe before, so she had no idea about the outside world. Therefore, she asked, "Dad, our benefactor told us to go to the imperial city of the Light Wind Empire, but... how long will it take for us to get there?"

At the moment, Yu Feng's expression was somewhat awkward.

He stroked Yu Fu's head and said, "It's not that far. From here to the imperial city... should take half a month of travel."

...

A gust of wind started blowing and then engulfed the entire room.

A speck of light appeared in the air and gradually formed a complete magic array. As the wind violently blew on, a figure slowly appeared in the center of the wind.

Bu Fang's thin figure walked out of the wind and stood in the middle of the room. As he sensed the familiarity of his surroundings, he suddenly felt a sense of comfort.

"As I thought, the inside of the store is still the most comfortable," Bu Fang exclaimed.

After staying in the Illusory Spirit Swamp for so long, his entire body was feeling sticky. Therefore, the first thing he did after returning was not examining the ingredient that he obtained; instead, he immediately headed into the bathroom.

For a chef with a slight obsession with cleanliness, having a dirty appearance was most unacceptable.

However, while Bu Fang was happily taking a shower, he did not realize a crowd was already gathered outside the store...

Chapter 181: Unbelievable! Owner Bu is Treating

"Still not open? Looks like there is no hope today!"

"I've been here three times already! What's going on with Owner Bu? Business has been shut down for almost two days? Could it be that he is innovating a new dish?"

"Owner Bu has changed, he wasn't like this in the past."

A crowd has gathered at the entrance, congesting the alleyway that used to be quite spacious. They all stood in front of Bu Fang's store, immersed in chatters with each other.

Ouyang Xiaoyi's pretty brows knitted into a frown as she stood by the entrance of the store, occasionally turning her head to gaze at the firmly shut doors. Her delicate lips pursed while she thought, "this Smelly Boss... no advanced notice whatsoever before closing business!"

Fatty Jin, with his protruding belly, extended his chubby neck in an attempt to peer into the store to see whether Owner Bu was indeed studying a new dish. He gave up quickly however, as he couldn't get even a glimpse of the store's interior. Plus, no aromatic scents were drifting out of the store. On second thought... there probably wasn't a new dish being made.

Xiao Yanyu put on her veil and lifted her beautiful eyes to look inside the store, but her gaze eventually landed on Xiaoyi as she murmured quietly. "Xiaoyi, let's leave, looks like Owner Bu won't be opening business again today."

Luo Sanniang had a hot temper and was already running out of patience as she stood there. If it weren't for Juan'Er, who was next to her with a food container in hand and kept on pulling her back, Luo Sanniang probably would have forced her way into the store to take a look.

However, the consequence of forcefully intruding would be dire...

Blacky was lying on the ground, and as its eyes looked at this crowd of people up and down, its lips curled, as if it sensed something hilarious and pathetic.

But Blacky was also confounded by why Bu Fang hasn't openen business for two whole days. It didn't affect him that much though, even if it meant he couldn't eat the delicious Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs.

...

Splish Splash

Streams of water ran down, gliding across Bu Fang's fair skin. Pieces of hair, moisten by the water, stuck to his body. Bu Fang tossed his head, instantly sending splashes of water flying everywhere.

Warm steam rose up, both cloudy and hazy.

Having just bathed, Bu Fang's body was emanating warmth. He wiped his dripping hair with a towel and walked out of the bathroom with a satisfied look. Taking a shower after pure exhaustion is the most fulfilling thing in this world. If only one could also enjoy gourmet cuisine at that very moment...

It'd be jollier than being an immortal god!

Draped with a long robe around his slightly slim figure, Bu Fang leisurely walked to the window. The windows were firmly shut and obscured view to the dark nightfall outside.

His long hair was toweled a little bit drier, but it still felt quite damp. Bu Fang pushed open the window, instantly feeling a fresh cool breeze drift inside and glide through his moisten hair. It made him feel completely refreshed.

"Oh crap! The window just opened! Owner Bu is inside the store!"

"Damn! Can it be that Owner Bu snoozed like a pig for the past two days? He didn't even wake up at the ruckus we've caused here?"

"Who would have thought that Owner Bu didn't go out! Then, what kind of indescribable thing is a guy doing in his room? Was he really... just merely studying a new dish?!"

...

When the window was cracked open, Bu Fang didn't even get to take a breath of fresh air before the alleyway started ringing with commotion. The noise was filled with shock and bewilderment... and a deep sense of resentment.

Bu Fang was startled at once, and stretched out his neck to look downstairs. His dampen hair drooped down his face, giving him a chill.

"Huh? Why are there so many people? What's everyone doing here?" Bu Fang asked innocuously as he squinted perplexedly at the swarm of people underneath grinding their teeth and glaring back at him.

Those people standing downstairs were furious. "Owner Bu, why the innocent face? Come on down, we promise we won't beat you to death!"

"Store closed for two days without a word, and you ask us what we're doing gathered here." In a flash, everyone in the crowd starred daggers at Bu Fang with spiteful eyes. It made Bu Fang shiver as he felt all his hair stand on end.

"Smelly Boss! What are you doing? Why didn't you open business for two days!" Ouyang Xiaoyi scuttled over, lifted up her tiny face to shout at Bu Fang fumingly.

She arrived at the store early for the past two days and waited by the store for a long time, thinking that her Smelly Boss would open the door. At the end... the shutters remained firmly closed for all

two days, not having budged even a bit.

As Bu Fang detected Ouyang Xiaoyi's vexed tone, his pupil shrank and the corners of his mouth widened. He suddenly remembered.... that before leaving for the Illusory Spirit Swamp, he might have forgotten to hang up the "Closed" sign by the door of his store.

"Did I not hang up the 'Closed' sign by the door?" Bu Fang calmly asked the crowd beneath with a straight face.

Everyone shook their heads in unison. If there was the "Closed" sign, they wouldn't be waiting here like idiots... What happened to the foundation of trust between people!

"Oh, then some household's naughty dog must have ran off with the sign on the door for fun." Bu Fang coolly bullshitted.

The crowd was speechless.

Blacky rolled its eyes. "Only a short time no see, how did this brat get such a thick skin? "

"Wait a moment, everyone." Bu Fang calmly said to the crowd beneath as he leaned on the window cell. The robe slid down a bit, exposing his fair skin.

"I'm coming down to open shop, everyone wait for me."

Afterwards, Bu Fang retreated in his room and changed out of his thin robe. His hair was still somewhat damp, but with the use of true energy, his moisten hair began to emit warm steam, completely drying everything.

Using a velvet rope to tie up his hair, Bu Fang walked out of his room, down the stairs, and into the store.

As the store's shutters opened, a cold wind rushed in. The crowd looked at Bu Fang, a line of people starring at each other eye to eye.

Looking at the group by the door, there seemed to be around a dozen people. Most of them were familiar faces, old customers. Bu

Fang's heartstring tugged, feeling slightly apologetic.

"Sorry for the long wait, come on into the store," Bu Fang took a step back and said to the crowd.

Ouyang Xiaoyi charged in first in fume, with a frown still across her forehead.

Bu Fang's lips curled as he patted Ouyang Xiaoyi on the head. The latter tried to duck away in discontent but didn't succeed.

"Sit down everyone, if there isn't enough space just try to squeeze in. As a token of my apology, everyone can taste my new dish for free. Let's count that as a compensation." Bu Fang lightly nodded at the crowd and proposed softly.

The crowd in the store was instantly shocked as everyone looked at Bu Fang with an incredulous expression. Xiao Yanyu's eyes sparkled in a bizarre way as Xiao Xiaolong's vermilion colored lips opened to a gape.

Unbelievable, Owner Bu of the blackhearted restaurant... was actually treating!

Owner Bu's treating on the house, now that was the chance of a lifetime. Owner Bu was known for his unprecedented level of blackheartedness in the Imperial City. A single serving of Improved Egg-Fried Rice was sold at the exorbitant price of 10 crystals. A blackhearted owner was going to treat its customers?

The crowd's astonishment turned into exhilaration, as they feverishly looked toward Bu Fang.

Bu Fang glanced at the crowd and solemnly nodded his head, patted Ouyi Xiaoyi's head once more, and turned around toward the kitchen.

"System, if I'm treating because of objective reasons, will my crystals be deducted?" Bu Fang asked placidly.

"The host's so-called objective reasons aren't due to system flaws.

Therefore, if the Host will treat, then all expenses will be deducted from the crystals earned by him," the System replied promptly and gravely.

The corners of Bu Fang's mouth tweaked, but he nonetheless walked toward the kitchen, unperturbed.

"If that's the case... then it'll be fine as long as I don't use the ingredients provided by the system." Bu Fang murmured.

The System was speechless.

Chapter 182: The New Dish After Two Days of Experimentation

Bu Fang easily guessed that if he used ingredients provided by the system to cook, the system would, given its nature, deduct his crystals... That was why Bu Fang astutely decided to utilize the many ingredients he gathered by himself from the Illusory Spirit Swamp.

Many spirit herbs were collected during this trip, though it didn't include much high-graded ingredients, Bu Fang came across an unexpected surprise. That would be the serpent-men tribe's fleshy first-grade spirit fish. Though its grade wasn't high, every fish had extremely plump and full flesh.

Bu Fang brought back quite a few of those fishes, as he didn't actually get to taste the Aromatic Grilled Fish he cooked in the serpent-men tribe and felt awfully regretful. Though he was a chef, he was just as much a foodie. Since his heart kept on calling out to the grilled fish, he brought back a couple, not to mention this fish wasn't that valuable in the serpent-men tribe anyway.

In the serpent-men tribe, Bu Fang was able to cook such delicious grilled fish under tough and lacking circumstances. Now that he was back in his store, provided with much better equipments, the taste of the grilled fish would undergo an immense refinement.

The crowd outside greatly anticipated Bu Fang's new dish, as Bu Fang's new dish never failed to amaze them every time.

Standing in front of the cupboard, relishing in the clean and fully equipped kitchen of the store, Bu Fang took in a deep breath. He sighed in revelation. The conditions of the store were remarkably better than that of the serpent-men tribe.

With improved equipments and environment, Bu Fang became all the more confident in the cooking of this grilled fish.

Taking out two slightly squirming, plump fishes from the System's dimensional storage, Bu Fang examined the fleshiness of the fish and grew to like it more and more, even though the spiritual grade of the fish was low.

A wisp of smoke twirled around Bu Fang's hand, and the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife appeared. The clear spring water was used to wash the kitchen knife. Even though the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife had self-cleansing properties, Bu Fang, being slightly germaphobic, still subconsciously washed the kitchen knife.

After washing the kitchen knife, Bu Fang began to handle the plump fish. Since he was quite proficient with handling fish, the two fishes were processed in no time. Next, he slit the fish from belly to its back, unfolded it, and marked a few cuts on the fish.

He took out a porcelain pot, added cooking wine, placed the processed fish within, layered the fish with some marinated ingredients, and put it into the kitchen cabinet for marination.

With the System's help, the marination time could be greatly reduced.

During the waiting time for the marination to be complete, Bu Fang began to prepare the other side ingredients. He took out fruits and vegetables, twirled the knife in his hands, and finished processing everything.

Lastly, he took out a ball of blood-red Blood Crown. The blood crown of a seventh grade Black Swamp Boa was highly precious as it contained a rich level of spiritual energy. The surge of this spiritual energy would render one astounded.

Bu Fang cut off a third of the Blood Crown, and once a crimson Blood Crown was slashed open, a gush of spirit essence charged out like a lively dragon. This was none other than the essence of the Black Swamp Boa, and it was naturally extraordinary.

The texture of the Blood Crown resembled that of fungus, so Bu

Fang chopped up this one third of Blood Crown into strips and mixed it with the vegetables.

Taking the two pieces of well-marinated fish out of the cabinet, Bu Fang specially requested the System to provide a pan needed for grilling fish.

Even though the System was stingy, none of Bu Fang's crystals would be deducted for providing a pan for the new grilled fish. Deduction would only occur when Bu Fang requested ingredients.

The two fishes were placed on the pan and then pushed it into the oven for grilling. Given the steaming temperature dispersing within the oven, the flesh of the two fishes gradually became well-done. When the timing became just right, Bu Fang took out the pan, and the aroma of the fish spread out.

Fruits and vegetables, already stir-fried with oil, were poured on top of the grilled fish. The Blood Crown melted gradually under the high temperature of the grill, and its spirit energy seeped into the fish meat and vegetables.

A strong fragrance dispersed along with the spirit energy, and it uncontrollably stimulated Bu Fang's appetite.

The two fishes were sizable, enough for the people outside to taste test.

...

"Say, knowing how black-hearted Owner Bu is, what kind of new dish would he treat us with?" Fatty Jin extended his neck as he asked those nearby.

Luo Sanniang's eyes rolled, her lips forming a smirk. "You never know for sure. Given Owner Bu's nature, maybe he'll whip out an ordinary steamed corn bread and sternly tell you that it is the new dish."

"No... No way! If Owner Bu said it's a new dish, it'll definitely be worth the anticipation!" Juan'Er placed the food container on the

table and retorted, shyly and quietly, when she heard Luo Sanniang's words.

Everyone was awfully curious to know what kind of dish Bu Fang would make for them. It was a difficult question, since they ate at the store on a daily basis and knew very clearly the quality and price of Bu Fang's dishes. If Bu Fang said it was on the house today, but only treated a dish that wasn't even worth one crystal, then they would conclude that Bu Fang was truly god damn black-hearted.

This was also why Bu Fang decided to take out the Blood Crown.

Just relying on the plump fish from the serpent-men tribe may fulfill the standards of taste, but because the spirit level of this fleshly fish was far from strong, if Bu Fang only grilled this fish, his customers would definitely feel disgruntled.

Just as the crowd was chattering tête-à-tête, Bu Fang slowly sauntered out of the kitchen with the pan containing the grilled fish in his hands.

This pan was large, so Bu Fang did not ask Ouyang Xiaoyi to serve, and instead personally carried it out and placed it on a table.

A waft of rich aroma drifted from the grilled fish, causing the crowds' eyes to sparkle right away.

"It really is a new dish! This... this is something I've never seen before. It's even served in a special apparatus!" Fatty Jin's eyes stared straight at it, he couldn't believe Bu Fang actually took out this new dish.

The corner of Luo Sanniang's mouth twitched, it was incredible that Bu Fang actually conscientiously delivered a new dish... She thought Bu Fang was going to toss out a steamed corn bread and call it a day.

But of course, having a new dish was terrific... At least they were in luck to give it a taste!

The crowd held up their chopsticks and bowls, unable to hold themselves back. Sniffing the fish's rich, mouth-watering fragrance that spread through the air, the crowd was simply intoxicated.

However, before they even moved their chopsticks, Bu Fang intervened.

"This is a grilled fish, don't be impatient... You don't get to eat delicious grilled fish if you're in a hurry," Bu Fang declared.

Thereafter, under everyone's stunned gaze, Bu Fang pried open the top half of the pan, revealing a hollow section within the grill.

Bu Fang lifted a finger and a wisp of ivory-colored true energy floated out of his fingertip, as if a spirit was pulsating upon it.

The finger pointed at the hollow inners of the grill, and right under everyone's astonished eyes, a shining luster ignited within the pan and turned into a simple magic array.

Scorching heat rose from the magic array.

Bu Fang placed the fish on the grill, the magic array circulated underneath, roasting the grilled fish within the pan.

The magic array emitted a brilliant radiance, rendering the entire pan vividly vibrant. It was breathtakingly beautiful.

"This is the new dish I invented these two days, Spirit Array Grilled Fish." Bu Fang made up some baloney with a straight face, finding a compelling excuse to justify his absence.

Under the magic array's roasting, the aroma of the grilled fish became even stronger. Gleams emitted by the magic array played with the color of the grilled fish, causing it to change constantly, pale red, dark red, pale red once again...

Sizzling hot steam became increasingly visible.

With clusters of fruits and vegetables on top, the grilled fish looked stunning. Its visual representation was enough to keep one

enchanted, not to mention the fish's rich aroma under the effect of the magic array.

"This is the first plate of grilled fish. Take your time, everyone. There's another plate inside, I'll go get it," Bu Fang announced.

"Go ahead, go ahead..." The crowd murmured halfheartedly, already losing track of Bu Fang's words.

The corners of Bu Fang's lips curled, he glanced at this group of people swallowing their saliva, and turned to head back to the kitchen.

"Right, Owner Bu, when is the proper time for us to start eating this grilled fish?" Fatty Jin suddenly remembered to ask a crucial question, and inquired as he looked over his shoulder.

"Guess." Bu Fang waved his hand and answered coolly, with his figure quickly disappeared into the kitchen.

"Why would I ask if I was going to guess..." Fatty Jin wanted to snap back at Bu Fang as he turned his head back indignantly, but his pupils suddenly shrank.

"Damn it! You barbarians, save me some!"

Fatty Jin gaped grievously at the flock that had already charged toward the grilled fish. Seeing that the plump, juicy fish meat was being taken piece by piece, Fatty Jin felt as if all the fat in his own body was being sucked clean. These savage brutes... what happened to the promise of waiting for the fish to cook?

What happened to the indestructible foundation of trust between people?!

Chapter 183: The Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs Eaten by the Dog

In the dark evening, two crescent moons intertwined, emitting a chilling glow, as if the earth was masked with a gossamer veil.

Fang Fang's Little Store was well lit, with waves of hot mist floating out. There was aroma within the hot air, and spirit energy fused within the fragrance. The two intermingled and fulfilled each other.

With the passing of time, the bustle within the store slowly passed, and the hot mist waned.

Bu Fang stood perfectly straight by the store's entrance. The crowd was thoroughly relished. Tonight's grilled fish made them eat their fill, and their faces were blushing from the rich amount of spirit energy within dish. The tender and juicy fish meat, the permeating fragrance, and the bubbling soup all rendered them uncontrollably insatiable.

One by one, the pleased crowd waved their goodbyes to Fu Bang, walked out of the alleyway, and left for home with a satisfied rub on their bellies.

Ouyang Xiaoyi was no longer cross. She beckoned to Bu Fang and then left the store with Xiao Yanyu. Two shadows, one graceful and one perky, slowly disappeared into the dark night.

"Hun? Are the egg tarts you've prepared for me to taste in this food container? Remember... You only have two chances." Bu Fang glimpsed at the last two figures. One was the burping, red-faced Luo Sanniang, the other a blushing darling, Juan'Er.

Without a doubt, Bu Fang was asking Juan'Er.

Juan'Er heard Bu Fang's words, but shook her head resolutely, and said: "Not today, I'll make a new patch of egg tarts tomorrow for Owner Bu to taste. Today's... has gone cold, and thus it'll affect

the taste."

Bu Fang was slightly taken back, but didn't say anything and merely nodded his head.

"Owner Bu, your grilled fish tastes truly amazing! Even though you've got flaws up and down, your cooking is sincerely good! I, Luo Sanniang, am utterly won over by your cooking." Luo Sanniang ogled at Bu Fang with a flushed face, and then chuckled.

Bu Fang remained calm, as he was well aware of this lady's unruly and crazy ways, and had already learned how to get a grip of himself.

The two also quickly bid farewell to Bu Fang and left the alley.

The alleyway, which had just been bustling with noise, suddenly regained its serenity. Bu Fang let out a long breath, glanced at Blacky who was sleeping by the door, curled his lips, turned back toward the store, and shut the door on his way in.

Exhausting... right now, he just wanted to hit the hay.

...

"Blacky, time to eat."

It was morning, Bu Fang finished up his daily practice of knife and carving training, and painstakingly cooked a serving of Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs. He carried the ribs outside of the store as he softly called out.

Blacky's nose twitched and its eyes twinkled as it gawked at the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs in Bu Fang's hands. "This Lord Dog has ribs to feast on again!"

Bu Fang placed the ribs in front of the big black dog, rubbed Blacky's silky, smooth, immaculate fur, then stood up and headed back into the store.

Bu Fang's steps came to a halt and his pupils slightly constricted as he glanced at the earthy-yellow flower pot in the corner.

"Hmm? This... this has already grown into a sapling?" Bu Fang muttered, dumbfounded. The seed hadn't been planted within the flower pot for too long, yet a bark had already sprung up. From the bark, new green leaves sprouted, and the plant was on its way to becoming a sapling.

Bu Fang became rather intrigued. He squatted down before the flower pot, and squinted at the budding leaves. On every single piece of leaf there were intricate patterns. These lines of patterns twisted and turned, dazzling its beholder.

"Four strips? No... five strips of pattern!" Bu Fang carefully counted the number of patterned lines on the leaf, finally tallying up the right number.

He stood up. Even though he didn't know what kind of fruits this seed would bear, the faint spirit energy emitting from the leaves proved this seed was extraordinary.

Although it didn't have much spirit energy, it circulated inside the store, and formed a unique ambience within.

It was a deeply mystifying atmosphere.

Apparently sensing the extraordinariness of the sapling, Bu Fang merrily darted to the kitchen, scooped up a bowl of system-provided clear spring water that was bursting with spirit energy, and poured half a bowl into the flower pot. After a moment of hesitation, he poured the rest as well.

"Drink up, the store's afforestation will be on you in the future," Bu Fang said solemnly to the sapling.

Bu Fang returned to the kitchen, approached the cabinet, and took out from the System's dimensional storage the ice-blue lotus. Within the seedpod there were drops of emerald-like lotus seeds, and wreaths of rich spirit energy lingered around it.

This Monarch Lotus was considered a seventh grade spirit herb. The serpent-men tribe's head elder wasted three seeds, leaving five

unused. However, this was plenty enough for Bu Fang.

The cabinet was opened, releasing a huge gush of hot energy. One half of Phoenix Blood Herb stood within, and so did the beaming Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit.

In addition to the seventh grade Ice Soul Monarch Lotus in Bu Fang's hands, he had gathered three types of seventh grade spirit herbs... It was rather inconceivable.

It was already incredible for anyone to possess even one type of seventh grade spirit herb, yet here was Bu Fang, just a chef of a tiny restaurant in the Imperial City, who had three types. It was simply unimaginable.

"There are enough spirit herbs for now. I can probably start brewing the wine... but there's no hurry. There needs to be an elaborate plan on the brewing procedure as well as how to start.

Bu Fang placed the lotus within the cabinet, which was extremely useful due to its spirit energy preservation properties.

Outside of the shop, Fatty Jin brought his heavysset troops. Fatty Jin, carrying an uncommon pair of sunken eyes, was brimming with enthusiasm. The kind of spiritedness... that wouldn't rest.

Bu Fang walked out of the kitchen to take a look and was immediately startled, "Oh jeez, you Fatty...what's wrong?"

Fatty Jin casted a distressing glance at Bu Fang and responded, "Owner Bu, after eating your grilled fish last night... I lay in bed, tossed and turned, with my heart afire, and could not sleep at all. I was up all night, you see?"

Fu Bang pursed his lips and lightly hummed, not that surprised at all. The grilled fish from last night contained a third of a Black Swamp Boa's Blood Crown. That ingredient overflowed with spirit energy, so it was no wonder it disrupted one's sleep quality.

Bu Fang could imagine that once Ouyang Xiaoyi and everyone else arrived, they would also have dark rings under their eyes.

"Owner Bu, one order of Golden Shumai. I'll switch things up a bit today and eat something mild." Fatty Jin sat down on a chair as he said to Bu Fang.

"Golden Shumai, mild? Don't lie to me about my own dish..." Bu Fang glimpsed at Fatty Jin but was too lazy to retort, then took down the other fatties' orders, and retreated into the kitchen.

Within the alleyway, a frail shadow drew nearer. This was an elder dressed in a gray gown, wrinkled creases clouded the skin on his face, much like the crumbling bark of an old tree.

The elder sauntered forth, one hand across his back, another griping and gently waving a fan made of some unknown spirit beast's feathers.

The waving fan seemed odd for such a cold day... but maybe that was this elder's unique predilection.

"Is this the Fang Fang's Little Store from an alleyway in the Light Wind Imperial City? Dishes that can crush Ah Wei's gourmet cooking... This old fellow must expand his horizons." The elder smiled lightly and waved his feather fan once more, and his visage betrayed an air of enigma.

"Grandpapa, aren't you cold..." Ouyang Xiaoyi stood behind the elder, ogled her big lovely eyes bemusedly at the old man waving a fan in the alleyway, and asked in a perking tone.

The elder's body froze momentarily and the air of enigma vanished from his face as he replied, "Of course... not, little lassie. Don't you think waving a fan during winter, is rather exquisite?"

Ouyang Xiaoyi could not help but roll her eyes. Was this elder there to pull her leg? It's winter, and people couldn't wait to add more layers of clothing, so who cared about exquisiteness?

"Is grandpapa going to eat in the store? Come with me," Ouyang Xiaoyi said as she led the way to Fang Fang's Little Store.

The gray-robed elder waved his fan, nodded, and trailed behind

Ouyang Xiaoyi.

The elder arrived at the entrance of the store, his gaze immediately landing on the big black dog gobbling down food from a porcelain bowl. This big black dog tilted his butt with his tail incessantly wagging, reveling in his feast.

"This is Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs... a crystal tangerine tone, suffusing a delicate fragrance. It's perfect!" The elder's pupils shrank and he exclaimed with admiration.

The elder didn't bother waving his fan and immediately strode toward Blacky. He gazed at the intensely aromatic, steaming Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs within Blacky's bowl, and gulped down his saliva.

"This chef-d'œuvre of a Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs, one that this old fellow has yet to come across in his lifetime... But what a pity, why is a dog eating it? It's like throwing God's gifts to the winds! What a reckless waste!"

Blacky's ferocious assault on the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs came to an abrupt stop, gradually lifting his doggy eyes to inspect the old man before him.

Chapter 184: This dog... Is No Ordinary Dog!

The old man stretched out his neck to stare at Blacky, and Blacky scowled back with his doggy eyes.

"What did this old man just say? That because this Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs was eaten by a dog, it's throwing God's gifts to the winds? A reckless waste?"

Blacky was instantly infuriated. "Why can't a dog eat Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs? What did this dog ever do to you, old man?"

Blacky snarled viciously at the old man, showing his teeth. Shreds of Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs still stuck to the crevices between his teeth...

"Hey ho, this dog is a hoot, what are you growling for? Surely you don't want to bite this old fellow?" The elder waved the fan made of an unknown spirit beast's feathers as he guffawed.

"Ah, but what a pity for the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs." The elder peered down at the gobbled up Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs in Blacky's bowl, sighed lightly, and turned around to leave.

But in the split second that he turned around, a titanic force of pressure suddenly dropped on the elder's body. The elder, with one foot lifted in the air, instantaneously felt drained, and almost fell to his knees.

The elder's pupils shrank and looked around in disbelief. This daunting force of pressure... simply made his soul tremble. Here he was, a reputable seventh level Battle-Saint, who almost knelt in front of this store.

If his knees really did hit that floor, it would have been utterly mortifying.

Blacky stuck out his tongue to lick his dainty little doggy paws, grumbled, and lifted up his doggy paws, lightly flicking it toward the elder.

The elder was absolutely unaware of what went down. He had his back facing Blacky, and had no idea where this force of pressure, as if charging from all directions, came from.

Bam!!

The wrinkled skin on the elder quavered, and he felt like his entire body was crushed by a huge mountain. With a thunderous boom, he was sent sprawling on the floor, as if he had sunk deeply within the ground.

"What the heck? What's going on! Why is this happening?"

The elder lifted up his dust-covered head, with a face full of bewilderment, but he still had no idea what happened. Somehow, out of nowhere, came an unseeable force of pressure that flattened him to the ground. Was he really this jinxed? Did he offend anyone? "If you have the guts... then come fight this out one on one!"

The elder wanted to cry but simply couldn't, and the sage-like gracefulness that he painstakingly built had just crumbled into pieces.

Blacky's doggy eyes sparkled a hint of naughty delight as he licked his doggy paws once more. "How dare you badmouth your Lord Dog right in front of him? If I don't discipline you, I'm afraid you won't even learn this Lord Dog's name."

Afterwards, Blacky reverted to shoveling his teeth into the porcelain bowl before him, it didn't take long for all of the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs within the porcelain bowl to be completely devoured.

The elder desolately picked himself up from the floor, his expression as rotten as if he was constipating. Was this little store deadly or what... Could it be there was a supreme being attending it? But he didn't say anything disrespectful earlier, did he? He only said it was a waste that the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs were eaten by a dog...

Dog... hmm? Dog?

The elder suddenly remembered something and suspiciously twisted his head to gaze at the tail-wagging, Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs feasting black dog...

The more the elder looked, the more his pupils shrank. He failed to closely examine this dog at first. Now, with careful scrutiny, he sensed a terrifying energy circulating within the big black dog's body.

"This dog... is no ordinary dog!"

With a dreadful glance at the big black dog, the elder turned around to step into the store.

Upon entering the store, the rich fragrance of food drifted in the air and instantaneously bombarded the elder's nose and mouth. It sent shocking shivers down the elder's body.

"It smells so good! This kind of aroma... Its been years since I've smelled this!" The elder held up his dust-covered head and exclaimed in bemusement.

Ouyang Xiaoyi perkily walked up to the elder, and asked: "Grandpapa, choose what you want to eat, Fang Fang's Little Store has always uphold business integrity, fair pricing, and absolute honesty. You can take a look at the menu behind you and tell me what you want."

The elder was taken back for a moment, but still twisted his head to check out the menu. If the price didn't matter before he took a look, now, after a quick inspection, the elder's face regained a look of ridicule.

"As the Ghost Chef, not even this old man charges this much for his dishes. This store... dares to demand such exorbitant prices?! And you call this fair pricing, absolute honesty?" The elder was dumbstruck and could not believe his eyes. In fact, anyone seeing the menu for the first time would be blown away by its

intimidating prices.

"You little lassie are disingenuous, you call this fair pricing, absolute honesty?" The elder questioned in dissatisfaction.

"The price is very fair. See how, even though its costly, everyone here is happily enjoying their meals?" Ouyang Xiaoyi responded.

The elder was lost for words, he glanced at Fatty Jin and others stuffing their faces with food, and his countenance suddenly turned peculiar. He had just checked out the price of the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs, one plate of ribs, fifty crystals...

A dog just ate a dish worth fifty crystals...

The elder felt a serious case of "a man's life is worse than that of a dog's" after stepping into the store.

"Please give this old fellow an order of the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs." The elder pondered for a while, but still ordered the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs at the end. He saw that Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs was the first dish on the menu, was already completely subdued by its fragrance, and thus decided to give the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs a good try. So what if it was fifty crystals?

As the Ghost Chef, the elder was not short of money.

"Take a seat first," Ouyang Xiaoyi said, then turned around, headed to the window of the kitchen, and shouted at Bu Fang an order of Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs.

Bu Fang nodded his head and continued to cook the dish he was working on.

The elder sized up the environment within the store. The atmosphere here was completely different from that of the restaurant he built in Qingyang Town. The former was mystifyingly secluded, generating an magnificently enchanting ambience. Yet the latter, because of its fervent and adventurous customers, could not compare in terms of its atmosphere.

"This is?!" The elder's gaze froze, as if he saw something exceptional.

With a few quick and hurried strides, the elder reached the place where the earthen-yellow flower pot stood, and squatted down before the pot, with his face filled with solemnity and gravity.

He closed his eyes and took in a deep breath. The new leaves on the branches emitted a light wisp of spirit energy. This spirit energy, albeit not rich, unconsciously kept the elder enraptured.

"This... this couldn't be the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit Tree? But... didn't Ah Wei say, this store owner had just received this prize? What's the deal with this small, burgeoning branch of the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit Tree?" The elder was flabbergasted. He suddenly felt like he could no longer understand this world.

Owner Bu should have only received a seed of the Path-Understanding Fruit Tree a few days ago. But having been plotted in this grotesque flower pot for a few days, the seed had germinated and sprouted out a branch, on which there were leaves imprinted with the Five Stripes Spirit Nets.

"He... he actually found a way to grow the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit Tree? This Owner Bu... what kind of immortal being is he!"

The elder had exhausted the level of bewilderment he could reach, suddenly feeling urgent to meet Bu Fang.

"The successful growing of the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit Tree is not a small feat. Emperor Changfeng had obtained the seed of this spirit tree for multiple years, tried to nurture it for so many years, yet never witnessed it germinating. Bu Fang had only planted it in this store for a span of couple days, but burgeoning Five Stripes Path Understanding leaves have already sprung out of the soil."

The elder took a deep breath to calm himself down. Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit Tree, if this name promulgated, it would once again push this store to the cusp of public opinion.

And much more perilous this time around.

The Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit Tree would bear fruit, and the ordinary Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit simply could not compare with the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit. Eating this Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit could bestow upon one the likely chance of achieving Path-Understanding epiphany.

What was unique was that as the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit Tree grew, it would disseminate a mystifying energy, and those enveloped by this mystifying energy were more likely to achieve breakthroughs.

That was why nearly all cultivators understood clearly the preciousness of the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit.

Here's an easy example. The Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit is the sensational spirit herb that can help a seventh grade Battle-Saint arrive at the barrier to eighth grade War-God. All others aside, its capability of bringing a seventh grade Battle-Saint close to the barrier to eighth grade Battle-God alone is enough to drive plenty of people crazy.

As the elder fixated on this Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit Tree, a tickling sense of avarice even shot through his heart.

He was also a seventh grade Battle-Saint. How badly he yearned to touch the barrier to eighth grade...

There were countless seventh grade Battle-Saints in this realm, stuck at the transition between seventh to eighth grade. At this moment in time, a Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit could practically shine light on their desperate grasp for hope, and would naturally attract numerous pairs of greedy eyes.

"Within the Imperial City, a small store actually plants a growing Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit Tree... as the saying goes, the precious stone may land its possessor in jail... this little store, probably won't be here much longer," The elder muttered.

Bu Fang had finished cooking the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs, wiped off the drops of water from his hands, and sauntered out of the kitchen only to see a gray-robed elder squatting before the earthen-yellow flower and gawking at the burgeoning bud.

This scene caught him by surprise.

This old man... what was he doing gaping at the store's plant? Could it be that the elder was familiar with the breed of this burgeoning bud?

Bu Fang was always curious about the breed of this sapling, and if the elder had answers, then Bu Fang had some questions to ask.

Chapter 185: You Lad, Will Regret Your Decision

"Your Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs are ready, please enjoy your meal."

Bu Fang's soft voice rang out, pulling the elder out from his train of thought over the burgeoning bud. The elder gave Bu Fang a look, and his expression was heavy with ponderation.

The elder stood up and squinted at the burgeoning bud with reluctant eyes, as his gaze gave the impression of being in the middle of a struggle.

The Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit Tree was too big of an enticement for a seventh grade Battle-Saint. No Battle-Saints could overcome the temptation of this spirit tree. After all, once the spirit tree bears fruit, it would blossom into the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit, a Path-Understanding Fruit that may help a seventh grade Battle-Saint ascend to the eight grade echelon.

Even a handful of eighth grade War-Gods would find it hard to resist the allurement of this Path-Understanding Fruit Tree.

"Are you the owner of this store?" The elder peered at Bu Fang and inquired.

Bu Fang looked back nonchalantly, nodding his head.

"Do you know what kind of tree you are planting here?" The elder pointed at the burgeoning bud within the earthen-yellow flower pot, and his countenance exhibited a stern solemnness.

Given the counterpart's grave expression, Bu Fang couldn't help but feel startled inside.

"No idea." Bu Fang shook his head. He truly did not know what this seed would germinate into. Since this elder seemed to know, then he should give it a try and ask.

"You actually don't know? Then why would you attend the

Hundred Family Banquet and win this seed?" The corners of the elder's mouth twitched violently and he asked with a rather seething tone. If it weren't for Bu Fang sticking his oar into the matter, his two disciples would have already brought the seed back.

"Could it be this seed would grow into something incredible?" Bu Fang probed tentatively. By the looks of this elder, he was bound to know about this seed.

The elder heaved a sigh and gazed at Bu Fang with pity, "You actually think this seed is something good? Yes, for some its considered a treasure, as for others... this seed is a terrifying impending death rune.

A death impending rune?! This terrorizing?! Bu Fang's heart jolted.

Surely this seed wouldn't blossom into a toxic substance? No way, the patterned lines emitted a righteous, healthy energy.

"Do you know the saying that the precious stone may land its possessor in jail? Holding on to something one has no ability to protect, no matter how precious the object is, would only be equivalent to a death impending rune.

Bu Fang blinked his eyes and his face suddenly became expressionless.

After all the fuss, it turned out that the elder was implying that this seed would blossom into something extremely valuable, but because Bu Fang's capability could not sufficiently safeguard it, it would result in an ensuing tragedy for Bu Fang.

But this news nonetheless prompted Bu Fang to sigh in relief.

If the seed would sprout into a toxic substance, then Bu Fang really couldn't do anything but discard it, but... if it was about Bu Fang being unable to guard it, then he could only give a snort of contempt.

"The security capability of this store was universally recognized. If this store couldn't protect it, then a mere seventh level Battle-God like you, old man, would have an even slimmer chance of safeguarding it."

The elder didn't say anything else, but sat down before the table and turned his attention to the gourmet cuisine. Seeing the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs within the plate instantly stimulated his appetite.

Bu Fang's Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs, crystal-tangerine-toned, suffused with a delicate fragrance, emanated a rich meaty aroma. It made one's mouth water and in a hurry to dig in.

A bamboo chopstick picked up a piece of Sweet 'n' Sour Rib. With a gentle bite, the tangerine toned Sweet 'n' Sour juice instantaneously spread within one's mouth. The plump flesh and meaty aroma burst forth in a flash, utterly intoxicating the elder.

"Gourmet delicacy... a gourmet delicacy that is hard to come across!"

The Ghost Chef was thoroughly stunned. Not even someone like him saw that coming. The youngster before his eyes had achieved such a high standard in his cooking abilities.

However, this wasn't what shocked him the most. One piece of rib down his throat, and his eyes bulged to a new level of roundedness... because this Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs was bursting with a staggering surge of spirit energy.

"Why can a dish contain such a rich level of spirit energy? Could it be that Owner Bu has a unique method of retaining the spirit energy of ingredients? "

Pieces of Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs were eaten in a row. The delicious taste was a no-brainer, but in every piece of rib an incredible amount of energy was hidden. The energy combined was stronger than that of the elixirs he consumed.

A bowl of Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs for fifty crystals, the elder suddenly

felt like it was worth it.

Bu Fang pocketed the fifty crystals that the elder handed over. His gaze fell onto the elder. He liked customers as such, who didn't drag their feet when it was time to pay.

"Owner Bu, let's negotiate about something, how about giving this burgeoning bud to me? You should know, with your cultivation level you definitely won't be able to safeguard it," the elder remarked.

Bu Fang was immediately speechless. How wouldn't it be safe in his territory... this old man was so damn ridiculous.

"No." Bu Fang rejected coldly.

The elder was instantly enraged. This fellow was merely a fifth grade Battle-King. Where did he get the guts to decline his offer?

"This old fellow isn't lying to you. Once your seed matures, it will undoubtedly attract many seventh grade Battle-Saints!" The elder earnestly explained to Bu Fang.

"Are seventh grade Battle-Saints such hotshots? If they dare to cause a disturbance here, then don't blame me for throwing them out one by one," Bu Fang said, unflustered.

...

Juan'Er wore a lilac floral dress today, thoroughly showing off her slim figure. In her arms was a food container, and in it was the egg tart on which Juan'er wanted to consult Bu Fang.

"Egg tart?" The Ghost Chef, though still preoccupied with Bu Fang, suddenly found his eyes lighting up. He inquisitively looked at the food container in Juan'Er's hands, feeling anxious.

Juan'Er's arrival broke off the back and forth between him and Bu Fang, successfully diverting both of their attentions.

There weren't that many customers in the store today, so after Fatty Jin's group finished their meals and left, there were plenty of

empty spots.

Juan'Er meticulously took the egg tart out of the food container. Once the lid was lifted, a rich creamy scent spread, with a strong, swelling aroma. Thought it couldn't compare to Bu Fang's Egg Tart, just judging by the fragrance, it still seemed pretty decent.

"Bu... Owner Bu, this is the egg tart I made from scratch, please give it a taste." Juan'Er placed down the egg tart, took a step back, and glanced at Bu Fang in considerable deference.

Bu Fang nodded his head, and his gaze fell upon the egg tart. The tint of the egg tart looked fine, much better than that of the first egg tart he taste tested.

Picking up the egg tart, Bu Fang took a gentle bite, and the creamy aroma instantly burst forth, transporting him to a place of boundless sky and vast plains, with herds of cows and sheep roaming through the grass.

Juan'Er batted her eyes, solemnly fixated on Bu Fang. She wanted to hear Bu Fang offer some words of commendation, that way Owner Bu would finally teach her how to make egg tarts his way.

Bu Fang chewed, nodding his head as he munched away, and finally lifted his eyes to give Juan'Er a glance.

"How's the taste?" Juan'Er asked excitedly.

Bu Fang did not respond right away. He looked at Juan'Er, whose composure was stirring in agitation, and replied placidly, "It hasn't reached my anticipated expectations yet. Go back and practice some more, then let me try it next again next time."

From an utmost high to an absolute low, the crash can be achieved in a flash.

Having been rejected by Bu Fang mercilessly, Juan'Er's joyful complexion froze, and instantly shifted to dispiritedness.

"S...Sorry, I'll definitely try harder. I'll go back and mull over this again, next time I'll absolutely make an egg tart that will satisfy Owner Bu."

Bu Fang admired Juan'Er's temperament, because this lady had a true commitment to gourmet cuisine. Even though her egg tart had yet to reach Bu Fang's standard, she still unwaveringly persisted to continue studying its cooking method.

Juan'Er left as quickly as she arrived. Stubbornly hugging her food container as she left the store, she headed back to continue studying the egg tart.

Other customers of the store also departed in a scattered manner, and only the odd old man was left now.

"Egg tart? The ones made by that lassie should be pretty good, why didn't it pass the test?" The Ghost Chef asked out of curiosity.

Bu Fang frowned, flickered a glance at the old man, and coolly replied, "There doesn't need to be a reason. If I think it hasn't reached my expectation, then it's not there yet."

The elder blanched, suddenly at a loss for words.

Bu Fang looked at the dumbfounded elder, then turned around to head back to the kitchen.

"You truly don't intend to give me the spirit tree's burgeoning bud?" The elder gazed at Bu Fang's back and asked.

Bu Fang ignored him and scurried straight back to the kitchen to practice cooking. He could no longer be bothered to retort this old man's words.

The elder emitted a long sigh. He felt regretful as he gazed at the burgeoning branches, and announced, "You lad, will regret your decision... Just wait till you are encircled by a group of ferocious Battle-Saints. Let's see how you'll fare then!"

The elder held his hands behind his back, shaking his head as he

left the store, and his shadow gradually disappeared into the alleyway.

Chapter 186: It Was Time to Start Brewing The Wine

Snowflakes fluttered in the air, as if feathers dancing. They twirled with a whistle of the wind, then softly descended, landing amidst the boisterous Imperial City.

The Gate of Heavenly Mystery, having undergone a regime-changing battle in the Light Wind Empire, transformed from an inconspicuous square to one worthy of attention, heavily guarded with an abundance of troops.

This Gate of Heavenly Mystery used to be a major route to enter the main halls of the palace. However, after the big battle, Ji Chengxue had ordered an alteration to this principal path. In the future, all those entering the halls mustn't pass through the Gate of Heavenly Mystery, and should enter instead from the westward of the Gate of Heavenly Mystery, the Gate of Peaceful Tranquility.

It weren't for any reasons other than the presence of a Double Calamity Dragon Head Array hidden in the Gate of Heavenly Mystery Square. After all, it was this array that had successfully suppressed all the sect warriors.

With such a powerful array resting on the Gate of Heavenly Mystery Square, Ji Chengxue, as an emperor, naturally had to protect it. But then again, the Gate of Heavenly Mystery had special significance for the palace, and Ji Chengxue could not completely seal it off. Activities in large scale still had to take place at the Gate of Heavenly Mystery.

In the stretched streets of the Imperial city, an elder who held his body erect sauntered about with his hands behind his back.

Snowflakes drifted like goose feathers, fluttering up and down, falling onto his body, but were eventually blocked off by an invisible force of energy.

"How many years have passed since I last visited the Light Wind Imperial City. Even Emperor Changfeng has already passed away, 'tis an unpredictable world, and time brings about inconceivable changes." The Ghost Chef's wrinkled visage was filled with nostalgia as he peered at his surroundings and exhaled a long breath.

Emperor Changfeng was a brilliant ruler. The Light Wind Empire developed at the speed of lightening under his reign, forcing countless sect warriors to acquiesce to the formidable empire.

"It's a pity, the peace and tranquility of this empire will come to an end. Once the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit Tree blossoms, it will attract warriors infinitely stronger than those of the sects. By then, this Imperial City... will collapse into mayhem." The Ghost Chef sighed once more.

He had just stepped out of Bu Fang's store. He couldn't help but admit that Bu Fang's store was peculiar, the flavors of the dishes deserved praise even from him, and that Bu Fang could enable the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit Tree to germinate was incredible.

The Ghost Chef recalled the mysterious force of pressure that knocked him to the ground by the entrance of the store. Even though he was caught by surprise when the force of pressure hit him, he still knew deep down that Fang Fang's Little Store, having survived the muddy waters of this Imperial City and persisted in demanding such exorbitant prices for its dishes, naturally had its foundational backbone.

With Bu Fang's cultivation level as a Battle-King alone, it was undoubtedly insufficient. From the Ghost Chef's perspective, the trump card of Fang Fang's Little Store was probably a seventh level Battle-Saint? Or maybe even a being of a higher level?

Being able to suddenly knock him down, Bu Fang's trump card was probably an upper tier seventh level Battle-Saint, but so what?

Once the news of the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit Tree leaked, the swarm of intruders wouldn't just be one or two seventh level Battle-Saints.

The Gate of Heavenly Mystery was right before his eyes, and the Ghost Chef continued his course, hands behind his back.

"Who is it!"

Guards patrolling the Gate of Heavenly Mystery had increased by manifold. Having noticed the Ghost Chef's figure, they brawled out.

The wrinkles on the Ghost Chef's face quivered, yet a smile followed. He took a step forward, and suddenly flashed past like a phantom, disappearing before the guards' eyes.

His foot landed on the snow-covered grounds of the Gate of Heavenly Mystery Square, making creaking noises. The Ghost Chef scanned the distant horizon and inhaled a deep breath.

"Double Calamity Dragon Head Array... is it right here?" The Ghost Chef peered at the stone pillars on the square, while his gaze was focused.

All of a sudden, a piercing blare blasted behind him, and a burley, robust figure manifested.

Xiao Meng gently landed on the the Gate of Heavenly Mystery Square, studied the elder standing erect, and brought his hands into a salute, "Senior, long time no see."

The Ghost Chef turned his head, his gaze falling onto Xiao Meng, and grinned. "The little brat from the old days has already reached the echelon of a seventh grade Battle-Saint by now. Your innate talents are indeed outstanding.

"I wholeheartedly thank the senior's compliment. His majesty requests the pleasure of seeing you, please proceed into the palace to meet him." Xiao Meng faced the Ghost Chef, still in deference.

"That works, this old fellow wanted to see how this new Emperor who had succeeded Changfeng is faring." The Ghost Chef lightly replied.

...

Wildlands, the center region.

A leisurely growl of a spirit beast rumbled. Almost all of the other spirit beasts of the Wildlands froze and extended their heads; they seemed to hear this spirit beast's snarl.

Boom Boom Bang!

The stubby bushes were suddenly crushed by a large figure, completely trampled into pieces. The floor shook and the surface of puddles of water vibrated.

Bang Bang! The silhouette of a mammoth-sized spirit beast appeared. It was a male lion with fiery red fur and two sharp buckteeth lashing out ferociously, resembling two razor-edged longswords.

This was a seventh level spirit beast, Fire Lion, an extremely savage spirit beast, one with formidable combat abilities.

On the back of this Fire Lion, actually sat a figure. His stature was proudly erect, with a chiseled, elegant face, covered with a scarlet long robe, and a dot of vermillion between the brows.

This was a charming, yet wild-natured man. He gently patted the Fire Lion's head, smiling lightly. "Finally a chance to walk out of the Wildlands, Lil' Fire, are you happy?"

Roar! The Fire Lion raised his head and howled, seemingly responding this man.

"Haha, take it easy, I brought along both Lil' Water and Lil' Thunder. Later on, you could all come out and get a breath of fresh air. But now we need to hurry along, our goal is... Light Wind Empire!" the man in a red robe gently stroked the Fire Lion's fur as

he said.

The seventh level Fire Lion was naturally quick-witted, and as such it twisted his head, and bolted away. The man in a red robe emitted a lighthearted laughter.

Not long after the man disappeared, three similar teams of men and women riding on spirit beasts appeared. Beyond doubt, every one of them emitted a terrifyingly powerful air of energy.

"Temple Master Shao is way too fast..." commented a woman dressed in red, smiling bitterly as she stared at the long gone silhouette.

"The trademark of Temple Master Shao's Fire Lion is speed. It's normal that we cannot catch up. But no need to worry, with Temple Master Shao's cultivation level and the Fire Lion's presence, there is slim chance of danger," another man dressed in red replied.

"Us Fierce Gods of the Three Temples, all sent delegates to the Light Wind Empire. What exactly happened? Why such a large scale mobilization?"

"Allegedly the High Priest had predicted that good fortunes have befallen on the Light Wind Empire, and then ordered the Third Temple's Temple Master Shao to head down in search of it. I was also pretty puzzled. What kind of fortunes could appear in a petty Light Wind Empire, and especially within the Imperial City, that would prompt the High Priest to send all three Temple Masters?"

...

"Master, are we going to find Owner Bu immediately?" Tang Yin hugged his sword. He rode a unicorn, peered at the majestic Light Wind Imperial Palace, and twisted his head to ask Ni Yan, who stood next to him, clothed in a loose robe.

Ni Yan held a gigantic spirit fruit in her hands, squirting juice everywhere as she bit into it. Her beautiful face, coupled with a

bulging cheek, made an amusing image.

She mumbled some words, pointed directly at the Imperial City, and slapped the horse's buttocks, taking the lead as she charged toward the Imperial City.

Tang Yin watched his foodie of a master helplessly, and urged his unicorn to follow suit.

This was their second time visiting the Imperial City. Tang Yin did not know the reason behind this trip, but Ni Yan claimed there were good fortunes, and so he tagged along.

But coming to the Imperial City had its pros, as he could taste Owner Bu's cuisine again.

...

Having sent off the last customer, Ouyang Xiaoyi stretched out her tired body. She bid farewell to Bu Fang, and left for the Ouyang Quarters.

Bu Fang gazed at the goose feather-like snowflakes twirling in the air, took a gentle breath, and shut the doors.

Having closed the store, Bu Fang entered the kitchen. He opened the cabinet and rubbed his chin. Glancing at the three types of seventh level spirit herbs emitting spirit energy within the cabinet, he meditated in silence.

It was time to start brewing a wine that would surpass Dragon's Breath.

Chapter 187: The Danger of Owner Bu

On a dark night, the snow lingered, and two crescent moons rested partly hidden between the clouds.

Light Wind Empire Imperial City, the Palace.

The inside of the main halls of the palace were brightly lit. The sound of dance and music echoed ceaselessly and the aroma of fine wine and gourmet delicacies pervaded the air of the palace. At the center, female dancers twirled their waists, trying hard to show off their beauty.

Court musicians, sitting in a corner, heartily performed pleasant melodies. The female dancers twirled and fluttered gracefully in accordance with the music. It was dazzlingly beautiful, making it difficult to swerve one's gaze elsewhere.

In the upper tiers of the main halls, Ji Chengxue sat upon the throne dressed in fine, luxurious garments. On the two sides sat important ministers of the royal court, many of which were new faces. They were obviously promoted by Ji Chengxue after the grand cleansing took place.

The big name households of the empire were also seated. Were it the members of the Xiao family, the Ouyang family, or the Yang family, they all sat within the main halls toasting each other, emitting waves of laughters.

The Ghost Chef sat close to Ji Chengxue. The wrinkles on his face stirred, revealing his contentment within.

"Master Wang, this sovereign has heard the former emperor's praise of the master back when he was still active and well. He said the master is a legend of the empire, having travelled across the continent for decades, and has witnessed countless wondrous spectacles as well as people and phenomenon. Allegedly, it was because the master desired to cultivate his cooking skills. It really

demands this sovereign's admiration."

Ji Chengxue filled a white jade cup with Bejewelled Nectar Wine as he verbally esteemed the Ghost Chef Wang Ding. Just as his voice faded, he drained the wine within the cup with one gulp.

Wang Ding also lifted the jade cup, expressed his appreciation towards Ji Chengxue, and gulped down the wine. He smacked his lips and acclaimed that it was good wine.

"Your Majesty, you mistakenly flatter me. This old fellow is nothing more than someone who wandered about the continent, certainly unworthy of the weight of your Majesty's commendation." Wang Ding smiled softly.

Ji Chengxue sincerely revered the elder before him. Of course, a large part came from his cooking skills and other capabilities. But the story that Ghost Chef Wang Ding had journeyed across the continent was indeed truthful.

"Master Wang is being modest. The Hidden Dragon Continent is vast and without boundaries. This sovereign is aware that the Light Wind Empire is nothing more than a pellet-sized dot within the continent. My heart yearns for the vast universe out there, and thus this deference to the master comes from the bottom of the heart.

"If Master Wang can afford his time, how about introducing this sovereign to some of the places within the Hidden Dragon Continent, for the sake of satisfying this sovereign's curiosity." Ji Chengxue faced the Ghost Chef Wang Ding, rising the glass again as he spoke.

The Ghost Chef did not turn down the request. He was actually born in the Light Wind Empire, and as the Empire prospered, his fame as the Ghost Chef also spread. The numerous years afterwards he spent roaming through the continent, and it was only a couple of years ago that he settled in seclusion outside of the Wildlands, in Qingyang Town, and opened a small restaurant.

The crowd within the main halls suddenly turned to gaze at the Ghost Chef, while their ears perked up. One often felt an inexplicable yearning for the unknown, and even those as noble and privileged as the imperial aristocrats could not escape this. Even someone as almighty as Xiao Meng held his breath in curiosity.

"This old fellow had travelled across the continent for decades. It's a shame to admit that I have yet to cover the entire continent. The continent is boundless, and this old fellow believes he could never reach the ends even if he devoted an entire lifetime. But this old fellow did not end up empty-handed.

"Your Majesty should be aware of the Wildlands. It is vast in territory, filled with countless savage beasts, and is practically known as a forbidden zone to humans. But in the continent, there are many regions as such." The Ghost Chef Wang Ding took a sip of the Bejewelled Nectar Wine, emitted a long breath, and said slowly.

"Up north there is a field of vast, boundless swamp known as the Illusory Spirit Swamp. Its level of menace is not even a degree lower than that of the Wildlands. The spirit swamp is broad, but the species of spirit beasts are rich and the amount of spirit herbs innumerable. Even seventh grade spirit herbs exist there. This old fellow trekked across the Illusory Spirit Swamp for many years and has witnessed plenty of peculiar species, for example, the serpent-men tribes, the scorpion-men tribes, and more."

The crowd within the main halls gasped, taking in a chilled breath, serpent-men tribes... that sounded pretty incredible.

"There is a big city in the spirit swamp, built by the serpent-men tribes, that is towering and majestic. There are many warriors among the serpent-men tribe, much more than the Light Wind Empire can conceive. Within the Illusory Spirit Swamp, the serpent-men aren't the strongest. Instead, there is another villa erected among the clouds, called the White Cloud Villa. This old

fellow has only heard of this villa's name but has yet to witness it with his own eyes."

Ji Chengxue's eyes sparkled, a gush of heated blood surged up his heart as he took in a chilled breath. White Cloud Villa, serpent-men city... The continent was immense, and it truly contained an infinite variety of fantastic phenomena.

"In the east, there is a plain of continuous large mountains, referred to as the Hundred Thousand Mountains, where there is an endless sweep of mountainous ranges and peaks. That was the most frightening zone for this old fellow, who spent a decade there but could not reach the ends of the ridges... The forces of power within the mountain ranges are complex, there are spirit beasts, humans, and unknown species. They all compete for the resources within the mountains for self development.

"In the south, there is a boundless ocean. It stretches beyond one's visual horizons, but nobody could tell where it ended..."

The Ghost Chef Wang Ding shared a great deal, or maybe it has been too long since he last told his tales. That night, he unleashed his words, describing with meticulous details his adventures. For the crowd within the main halls, this was a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

It turned out that the continent... was really that limitless and beyond belief.

"Master Wang really is a saint. All these places you've mentioned are unimaginable for us here. The northern Illusory Spirit Swamp, the eastern Hundred Thousand Mountains, the Southern boundless ocean... Hmm, the mere sound of it floods this sovereign's heart with emotions." Ji Chengxue raised the wine glass once again, and toasted the Ghost Chef Wang Ding.

Wang Ding also raised his wine glass and drained it.

Suddenly, a waft of aroma drifted by, and a number of graceful

court maids carrying porcelain plates strolled in. Rich fragrance emanated from the porcelain plates.

Ji Chengxue noticed this and suddenly burst into laughter, "Haha, finally here, Master Wang, give this a taste, here is the Oyster Bun that this sovereign specially ordered someone to purchase from Owner Bu. Master Wang has intensively studied cooking and would probably appreciate it."

The Ghost Chef Wang Ding was taken back. His gaze turned to the porcelain plate that court maids have laid down in front of him. Within the plate was a piece of round-shaped, plump golden fried bun.

Ji Chengxue licked his lips, picked up the piece of Oyster Pancake, and took a bite. Suddenly, the rich aroma burst forth, and with the plump oyster in his mouth he felt completely intoxicated. Because of preoccupation with busy court affairs, whenever he needed to satisfy his cravings, he could only eat this Oyster Bun.

So savory... unbelievably savory!

The Ghost Chef took in a deep breath, and as the rich fragrance provoked his taste buds, he was unable to restrain his mouth from watering.

He also picked up this Oyster Bun and took a bite. It made a light crispy sound.

As the outmost layers of the Oyster Bun was ripped open, its aroma burst out like an exploding bomb and embraced the Ghost Chef, keeping him intoxicated and unable to escape. His mouth could not stop chewing, and the fragrances from the meat, oysters, and shredded turnips intermingled, presenting him with an unprecedented taste and texture.

"Delicious! Absolutely too delicious!" Wang Ding snapped back to reality and swallowed a mouthful as he showered it with praise.

"Haha! As long as Master Wang likes it. Since this sovereign

planned the banquet, he specifically ordered many people to head down and purchase this Oyster Bun from Owner Bu. Each person is limited to one order, and each order only contains two pieces. With this many orders of Oyster Pancake, Owner Bu is probably feeling exhausted by now." Ji Chengxue chuckled.

"Owner Bu? Do you mean the owner of Fang Fang's Little Store, located in the alleyway?" Wang Ding was dumfounded. He gazed at Ji Chengxue as he asked in bewilderment.

"Precisely. Could it be Master Wang is acquainted with Owner Bu?" Ji Chengxue was astonished.

The Ghost Chef Wang Ding shook his head with an odd look on his face, took a bite out of the Oyster Bun, and replied: "I had just left the store before entering the palace."

Oh? Ji Chengxue was immensely intrigued. The Ghost Chef Wang Ding was acclaimed as the man with the greatest cooking skills within the Empire. It was fascinating to know what kind of feedbacks he would give after trying Owner Bu's cooking.

"Owner Bu's cooking abilities is flawless. What is unique is that every dish of his contains a rich concentration of true energy, this is extremely inconceivable and not something a commoner can achieve," the Ghost Chef added. But just as he finished speaking, his brows formed a frown.

"But... Your Majesty, there is something to be mentioned, but this old fellow is unsure whether that is appropriate."

"Speak your mind freely." Ji Chengxue regained a serious posture.

"This little store has an ambiguous origin, and Owner Bu is of an unknown identity. Their existence in the Light Wind Empire Imperial City, within the capital of a kingdom, may bring about unthinkable disaster to the Imperial City." The wrinkles on the Ghost Chef's face froze as he spoke earnestly.

At this claim, Ji Chengxue, Xiao Meng, and Grandpa Ouyang all blanched in astonishment.

Owner Bu will bring catastrophe to the Imperial City? Now that sounds like a joke...

Chapter 188: Chapter 188: The Jar Within The Jar, Wine Within The Wine

"Why does Master Wang suggest so? Owner Bu has helped the Imperial City through various obstacles..." Ji Chengxue knitted his brows, and asked.

That was correct. He did not know Bu Fang's identity, nor the origin of the small store, but this didn't affect his trust toward the store. Because if it weren't for Bu Fang, the entire Light Wind Empire would have fallen to the sects during the last battles.

Even though he revered Master Wang, as the ruler of an empire, Ji Chengxue also reserved his own judgments. He did not believe that Bu Fang would bring disaster to the Imperial City.

Xiao Meng and others also thought this way because they have had numerous contacts with Bu Fang. Even though they could not fully comprehend Bu Fang, by his looks, he did not seem like someone who would bring about catastrophe.

Wang Ding was rather surprised. Based on Ji Chengxue's behavior, he seemed to have absolute faith in Owner Bu.

However, he was not too astonished and only gave a light smile as he said: "Does Your Majesty still remember the Hundred Family Banquet?"

"Of course I remember, it was the first Hundred Family Banquet after this sovereign succeeded the throne. It was remarkably grand, and Owner Bu happened to emerge as the winner of that Hundred Family Banquet," Ji Chengxue replied.

The Ghost Chef smiled, but it seemed like a mirthless grin. "This old fellow's two good-for-nothing disciples also participated, with the goal of coming in first to win Your Majesty's prize."

Um... now this was awkward. Ji Chengxue's complexion froze slightly.

"Your Majesty's grand prize was a seed, right? Your Majesty may not know what kind of seed it is, but this old fellow does," the Ghost Chef stated.

Ji Chengxue became rigid. That seed...

"That seed is from the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit Tree. Once mature the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit Tree will blossom into the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit. Your Majesty should be aware of the utility of the Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit, so, what do you suppose the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit can do?"

Once this was said, all those present instantly drew in a chilled breath.

Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit was a seventh grade spirit herb, then what about the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit? This... made one's hair stand on end!

"The Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit, once ingested by a seventh grade Battle-Saint, would endow the Battle-Saint a large probability of gaining enlightenment to the path, even a breakthrough to... eighth grade War-God!" Internally, the Ghost Chef still felt bewildered. He took a deep breath after saying that excitedly.

Ji Chengxue paled. Eighth grade War-God... what kind of an existence would that be?! But... that seed could not germinate. Ji Chengxue finally snapped back into reality and gazed at the Ghost Chef. He knew that the seed was valuable, but it was impossible to make it bud. The empire tried countless methods and still failed to germinate the seed.

Xiao Meng, from beneath, took in a deep breath. The echelon of eighth grade War-God was a state he yearned for irrepressibly. But... he was still light years away from that level.

The Ghost Chef sipped a mouthful of Bejewelled Nectar Wine,

calmed his agitated state of mind, then gradually lifted up his head, peered at those nearby, and lightly announced:

"Owner Bu, he got the seed... to germinate."

...

In Fang Fang's Little Store, the lights shone dimly.

Bu Fang scrutinized the three types of seventh grade spirit herb before him, sensing the rich spirit energy that emanated from within, and squinted his eyes.

Afterwards, his mind started to ponder over how to utilize these spirit herbs to brew wine.

For wine brewing this time, the Nine Brewing Method could no longer be used. The Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine was technically a rice wine, yet the ingredients this time were spirit herbs and spirit fruits, hence it called for a different brewing method.

This was precisely what gave Bu Fang a headache. However, that was still fine. In his previous lifetime, Bu Fang had experience brewing fruit wine. In that sense, he wasn't too worried, but was only concerned with how to brew this spirit wine to perfection.

"System, any recommendations for brewing spirit wine?" Bu Fang contemplated for a bit, but still inquired the system at the end. He believed it was safer this way.

The system did not reply immediately, and instead remained silent for ages, before finally replying solemnly: "Brewing the spirit wine counts as the host's temporary assignment. The assignment requires that the host independently brew a wine that can surpass "Dragon's Breath". Therefore, the system will not provide any particular methods."

"As expected..." the corners of Bu Fang's mouth curled up. He knew that given the system's nature, it would leave no loopholes for him to exploit.

He knitted his brows into a frown. Since the system wasn't providing a method, Bu Fang had to come up with something on his own.

The most difficult part about fruit wine brewing was the length of fermentation... This timing he had to control himself. If he unsealed the jar too early, the essence within the wine jar would be lost, thereby naturally reducing the quality of the spirit wine.

Bu Fang rubbed his chin and dwelled on this for a long time.

Next, Bu Fang stopped thinking, and instead took out a pile of lower grade spirit fruits from the system's dimensional bag. The grades of these spirit fruits ranged between two to three, not very high at all.

This was a purple spirit fruit, each plump and ripe. Bu Fang had tried a piece before, it was sweet and sour at the same time, quite suitable for making the wine nectar of this fruit wine.

A wisp of smoke twirled around his hand and a black unadorned knife appeared in his hand.

With a heavy smack of his palm, the surface of the table instantly vibrated, and all of the spirit fruits on it flew into the air one after another.

Bu Fang twirled the knife and utilized the Meteor Cutting Technique, waving the knife closer to cut the spirit fruits.

"Spoosh! Spoosh!"

A huge wine jar was placed underneath the spirit fruits. Every fruit that had been shredded by Bu Fang's knife fell into the large wine jar.

There was a great amount of these spirit fruits. After being all shredded into bits by Bu Fang, they filled up half a jar.

Taking out an extremely small wine jar, Bu Fang cleaned the wine jar, and brought out the Three Stripes Path-Understanding

Fruit.

This spirit fruit was a seventh grade spirit fruit, on top of which were three stripes of cloud shaped moires. Light and gentle as ever, the knife in Bu Fang's hand whirled, and with a play of the blade, it came down cutting without a trace of hesitation.

This seventh grade Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit was shredded into bits.

Because of the unique properties of the Dragon Bone Kitchen Knife, almost none of the spirit energy within the Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit eroded.

Having deposited the shredded fruits into the small wine jar, Bu Fang placed the small wine jar into the large wine jar filled with minced spirit fruits.

Using identical methods, the remaining half of the Phoenix Blood Herb was shredded and placed into the big wine jar. So was the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus.

With all three placed into the large wine jar, an invisible force seemed to entangle one another. The wine jar bearing the Phoenix Blood Herb emanated a fiery redness, and the wine jar holding the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus emitted a faint blue tone.

The wine jar with the Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit was rather peculiar, as three stripes of indistinct cloud energy actually formed outside.

The jar within jar, the wine within wine, all four elements fermenting simultaneously.

Closing the lid on the large wine jar, Bu Fang's eyes focused, after which both of his hands clasped on top of the large wine jar. A wave of true energy circulated naturally within his energy core, suddenly surging through and flowing into the jar.

Spoosh Spoosh!!

The shredded spirit fruits within the large wine jar were originally minced by Bu Fang. Under the pressurized force of the true energy, they squeezed out nectar, and this nectar quickly seeped through the flesh of the fruits.

Bu Fang's true energy slowly stirred within. As it ceaselessly circulated, his true energy also gradually permeated the wine nectar.

Having mixed and blended for half a night, the true energy within Bu Fang's body was nearly consumed to exhaustion.

Bu Fang released his hands from the large wine jar. He stumbled backwards numerous steps, lifted up his palms, and discovered that they were twitching slightly.

The true energy output this time was an immense depletion for him. Whether for his energy level or physical stamina, both had reached the limit.

"Using true energy to assist fermentation, the outcomes should be pretty good..." Bu Fang muttered, then lifted up the extremely weighty large wine jar, and walked toward the kitchen cabinet.

This cabinet was especially reserved for wine brewing.

Bu Fang took out the three jars of Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine within, and placed the large wine jar inside.

In this cabinet, the passing of time was accelerated, so perhaps after a few days the fermentation could be completed.

But Bu Fang was still unsatisfied. His brows knitted into a frown, and he felt that this was overly simplistic. Back then, Ni Yan had suggested that the brewing method of the Dragon's Breath was extremely intricate.

During the fermentation process, it was likely buried under the Heaven Alps Spirit Lake, and finally became wine after three years...

"System, can this cabinet simulate particular environments?" Once again, Bu Fang turned to the system. He felt that by applying such a common brewing method, the Dragon's Breath could not be defeated. Due to the variation in fermentation, diverging environments made a world of difference in terms of the quality of the wine nectar.

"The Time Elapsing Cabinet can simulate particular environments. It costs ten crystals per consumption and will be deducted from the host's revenue sales." The system replied promptly this time.

Bu Fang rolled his eyes. He knew that given the nature of the system, replying this quickly meant monetary deduction.

But it was merely ten crystals, he could afford it.

Bu Fang paid the ten crystals, after which his mind connected with the cabinet before his eyes.

Having placed the big jar within, Bu Fang found scenes after scenes of varying environments before his eyes. There was a world of snow and ice, an erupting volcano, the Heaven Alps Spirit Lake, and even a boundless ocean.

Which environment should he choose? Bu Fang contemplated for a while, and ultimately configured the environment to the bottom of an ocean.

The amalgamation of fire and ice, on top of the ocean's mighty current... this spirit wine even excited Bu Fang himself into fervent anticipation.

As for the time within the cabinet, Bu Fang thought it over carefully. Given the amount of true energy he injected himself, it still needed to ferment for around three years. Hence, Bu Fang configured the passing of time as three years within The Time Elapsing Cabinet, it would take up around a month.

After completing all of this, Bu Fang was in a state of exhaustion.

Feeling the drained true energy within his body, and with his brows knitting into a frown once more, he recognized the pressing urgency of creating a snack that could help one quickly regain true energy.

Having left the kitchen and crawled into his room, Bu Fang took a shower. The heated steam blurred his vision.

Even though his body was completely enervated, Bu Fang was extremely excited inside. A spirit wine brewed with three types of seventh grade herbs... Even Bu Fang himself had difficulty imagining its level of enchanting superiority.

At least he was certain that the Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine could not compare with this spirit wine.

Suddenly, Bu Fang became distracted as he lay onto his bed and narrowed his eyes...

There was another crucial question, this spirit wine... what should it be named?

Chapter 189: Once News Spread, Winds and Clouds Shook

The Hundred Thousand Mountains stretched beyond one's visual horizons, an unbroken continuous plain with layers upon layers of peaks and knolls.

Suddenly, amidst the mountainous range, there arose a thundering roar. A black dot flew from afar, and continually grew bigger as it charged forth.

It was a black falcon, impressively enormous, and the feathers on its body fluttered at god's speed, rattling and whistling. The falcon's eyes were incredibly sharp, emitting a radiance that sent chills down one's heart.

With a falcon's bellow that reverberated through the highest heavens, the Hundred Thousand Mountains rang with birds fluttering their wings.

On the back of the falcon sat a maiden dressed in a warrior's robe. The maiden's long hair formed a ponytail, making her look adept and unadorned. The maiden had fine, delicate features, she looked bashful and simultaneously adorable.

She carried a longbow behind her shoulder, and was seated on the falcon's back. Despite the fierce howl of wind, an invisible layer of barrier shielded her, and the maiden, utterly unperturbed, happily munched away at spirit fruits.

"Brother Diao, master told us to head to the Imperial City of the Light Wind Empire, take your time." The maiden extended her pale, tender hand, gently patted the falcon's head, and muttered with a smile, after which she continued eating the spirit fruit in her hands.

The soaring falcon rolled its eyes in a rather humanly fashion and picked up its speed.

...

Dacheng Islands was a piece of enormous island floating upon a vast stretch of ocean, within which countless high rising buildings erected.

In the center of a secret chamber within a nine-story-tall tower, the silhouette of a figure quietly sat cross-legged. His energy continued to float and sink, as if an odd wave circulated around him, a light golden true energy that encircled his body.

A golden relic rotated, within which echoed the singing of a sacred voice, giving one a sense of heavy peacefulness.

After a long time, the relic descended. It hovered above the person's hand, and was tucked away.

"The battle at the Gate of Heavenly Mystery nearly backset my cultivation level... the bitter hatred, this old fellow cannot just let it pass, Bu Fang... Fang Fang's Little Store, just you wait."

The cross-legged person suddenly fluttered open his eyes, and a beam of gold light spilled out, illuminating the entire secret chamber.

Zhao Musheng's complexion were filled with awe, and he gradually pulled up his body. Suddenly, a knocking sound rang by the door.

Zhao Ruge gradually walked in with an air of deference. Seeing Zhao Musheng with his hands folded behind his back, he bent over in a bow.

"Ruge, what is it, is something big about to go down in the Imperial City?" Zhao Musheng noticed that the visitor was Zhao Ruge, and his face broke into a gentle smile as he inquired.

Zhao Ruge's complexion still displayed some excitement as he gazed toward his father, "The Ghost Chef Wang Ding went to the Imperial City of the Light Wind Empire, and he even visited Bu Fang's little store."

"Oh? Ghost Chef Wang Ding? Isn't he living in seclusion by Qingyang Town?" Zhang Musheng kept his countenance.

"That's right, the very Ghost Chef Wang Ding, known for having traversed the entire continent. Ji Chengxue welcomed him with a banquet, and a highly important piece of information... was disseminated."

"Traversed the entire continent? Haha... this old man kept his thick skin as usual. Go ahead, what important piece of information?" The corners of Zhao Musheng's mouth curled, and he snickered with some disdain.

Zhao Ruge took a look at his father, and solemnly announced: "The first place prize at the Hundred Family Banquet was a seed of the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit Tree. And that seed in Bu Fang's little store... germinated."

Boom!!

A mighty surge of force suddenly erupted from Zhao Musheng's body. Zhao Ruge, once hit by this terrifying force of energy, speedily took multiple steps back, and smashed into the walls of the secret chamber.

"What did you say? The Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit Tree? Is this piece of information true or false?!"

Zhao Musheng's pupils swelled as he was immensely anxious.

The Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit Tree, recorded within the Dacheng Islands Buddhist collected works, was a miraculous spirit tree that could help a seventh grade Battle-Saint gain enough enlightenment to enter the echelon of eighth grade War-God.

But wasn't the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit Tree already extinct? Why would it appear... and especially in Fang Fang's Little Store?

"This message was spread from the palace. The Ghost Chef Wang Ding said so himself... it shouldn't be inaccurate." Zhao Ruge

rubbed his chest, alleviating the pent up sense of suffocation, and finally said.

"Hahaha! The heavens have come to my aid. Bu Fang, ah Bu Fang! You've brought this upon yourself! This old fellow only needs to further broadcast the news, and when the time comes, how will your little store survive a siege by numerous seventh grade Battle-Saints? Perhaps... even eighth grade War-Gods will stick in a foot! By then, there will be no need for this old fellow to lift a finger... and you'd be done for good!" Zhao Musheng guffawed at ease.

Zhao Ruge, seeing the chortling Zhao Musheng, hesitated for a bit, but still opened his mouth: "Father, by the entrance of Bu Fang's little store still lies a supreme beast..."

"What supreme beast! You listen to their rumors, but have you ever seen a supreme beast? That is a sublime, paramount existence... how could it be the guard dog lying by the entrance of a small store?! Perhaps it's merely an eighth grade spirit beast... but even if it is an eighth grade spirit beast, in the face of numerous seventh grade Battle-Saints and even eighth grade Battle-Gods... it cannot protect Bu Fang."

Zhao Musheng had never believed that a supreme beast would lie by the entrance of a small store. He had witnessed a ninth grade spirit beast with his eyes before, and that air of command felt nearly apocalyptic. A trivial Light Wind Empire, in front of a ninth grade spirit beast, was as flimsy as a papier-mâché.

Zhao Ruge choked. He was at loss for words.

Zhao Musheng continued to howl with laughter, and turned around to leave the secret chamber. "This old fellow is going to reach out to the elders of other sects. Those cowardly old men have always refused to join hands, but this time with the appearance of the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit Tree, let's see if they can still hold their composure."

...

Early morning, Bu Fang opened the door boards of his store, walked out with a richly aromatic Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs, and placed the bowl in front of Blacky.

Having patted the gluttonous dog who became lively at the sight of Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs, Bu Fang turned around to head back to the kitchen, and opened shop for daily business.

Fatty Jin brought along his heavysset troops and flooded into the store. He greeted Bu Fang, and began ordering food. He was incredibly familiar with the routine by now.

He had tried nearly all the dishes in Bu Fang's store, but had yet to get tired of them. This was pretty miraculous, probably attributable to Bu Fang's incredible cooking skills.

After Fatty Jin's party left, Ouyang Xiaoyi skipped in. Behind her followed her three idiotic brothers, the three Ouyang barbarians. Those three were rare guests.

"Hehe, Owner Bu, I have a craving for wine today, a jar of Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine." Ouyang Zhen scratched his head and smiled at Bu Fang.

"Do you need an order of Lees Fish? It goes well with the wine." Bu Fang batted his eyes, and marketed his food coolly, without changing his composure.

Ouyang Zhen, however, hastily waved his hands. He was not going to fall into Bu Fang's trap again. Back then he had ordered both the Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine and Lees Fish, but after having drank the wine, the taste of the Lees Fish was all lost... what a waste of crystals.

Bu Fang felt it a pity as he turned around, amidst Ouyang Xiaoyi's giggles, and entered the kitchen to take out a jar of Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine.

"In the near future, there will be a new wine. When the time

comes you could give it a try. Its taste is bound to surpass that of the Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine," Bu Fang said solemnly to the three Ouyang barbarians.

The eyes of the three brothers instantly sparkled. Owner Bu was coming out with a new wine, so they definitely had to show support. The three brothers nodded their heads in excitement.

...

In the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant, Qiao Bao stared at the women dressed in a long robe before him in desperation, and the corners of his mouths twitched.

"Why the hell is this woman back again? Hadn't she left the Imperial City already?"

"Hey oh, long time no see! Owner Qian's life looks pretty good." Ni Yan's stunningly beautiful face held a naughty grin, but it made Qiao Bao's hair stand on its ends. When this woman gave off such a smile, she was up to no good.

"My... great great lady, hadn't you already left the Imperial City? What are you back again?" Qian Bao's entire face scrunched up as he wailed sourly.

"This lady misses Owner Bu...s dishes. Can't I return to the Imperial City? Stop with the blabbering, tell people to empty the kitchen for me. This lady just learned a new dish, and want to seek Owner Bu's insights on it," Ni Yan announced.

Owner Qian was boiling with rage... "If you wanted to seek Owner Bu's insights, then shouldn't you go directly to Owner Bu's kitchen... how could you bully someone like this!"

Qian Bao wanted to mutter something, but suddenly shrank down by glare of Ni Yan's gorgeous eyes. Recalling the terrifying cultivation level of this phenomenally beautiful woman, he thought, "Never mind, we shall tolerate her this time."

"You are one of a kind, the kitchen is yours!"

Next, Ni Yan merrily occupied the kitchen of The Immortal Phoenix Restaurant. After a while, she carried a food container and left in jubilation toward the direction of Bu Fang's store.

Tang Yin witnessed his master dashing off and felt torn between laughing and crying at this sight. He took out a few crystals, offered them to Qian Bao, and expressed his apologies before rushing after Ni Yan's footsteps.

Qiao Bao shook his hands, glanced at the crystals in his hands and quietly tucked them away as he pursed his lips.

"Seems like... it wasn't such a loss."

Chapter 190: Owner Bu, Did You Miss Me?

In the main halls of the palace.

After a night of dance and music, the main halls regained their solemnity and desolateness. The ministers have already left one after another, and the eunuchs swept the main halls until they were spotlessly clean.

The former hustle and bustle were as if a dream by now. Beyond the halls, only Ji Chengxue was left sitting on the throne. His body was crouched as he rubbed his chin in contemplation.

Xiao Meng's figure gradually walked into the halls from outside. He stood from beneath, and bowed slightly to Ji Chengxue.

"Has the news been restrained?"

Ji Chengxue gave Xiao Meng a glance, and rubbed between his eyes and brows in fatigue.

Xiao Meng nodded his head, and replied gravely: "Your courtly servant was ordered to prevent all news from spreading the moment the banquet ended. As of now, information about the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit Tree in Fang Fang's Little Store is mainly contained, however..."

Ji Chengxue glanced uncertainly toward Xiao Meng, who had swallowed back the words on the tip of his tongue.

"Your Majesty, you should be aware that, even though our Imperial City has been harmoniously civil despite having gotten rid of many sect individuals from the last war, there remains many sect figures hidden within the Imperial City. The news may still leak that way, so it is best that we take safety precautions..."

Ji Chengxue frowned, held his body straight as he ruminated for a long time, and then gave a long sigh, "It is unbelievable that this old fellow, the Ghost Chef, would release such information at the banquet, this sovereign was really caught off guard..."

"Back when father, the emperor, was still alive, he had mentioned this Ghost Chef. This old fellow...incredibly thick skin, would often find ways to cut corners. In the past, the Imperial City had hosted quite a few cooking competitions, and this man relied on unseemly methods to defeat many opponents... It never occurred to me that after this many years had passed, the man's nature had not changed one bit."

The muscles on Xiao Meng's face quivered, "That's true... Given this old fellow's temperament, he must have offended many people during his trips across the continent. That he wasn't beaten to death... is certainly a miracle."

"The Ghost Chef, Ghost Chef... He is filled with devilish and wicked ideas, that's why he was given the name Ghost Chef. Of course, his cooking is also spectacular," Ji Chengxue stated calmly.

"To think I saw him as a senior elder, with a cultivation level of seventh grade Battle-Saint, and possible to ally. I never thought we would end up getting played by this old fellow. He had just left Owner Bu's store, and must have gotten the short end of the stick."

Ji Chengxue stood up, unhurriedly walked off of the throne and into the main halls, stretching his body.

"He acted as if it was a careless gesture, but actually wanted to publicize the news. I'm afraid it was to intentionally torment Fang Fang's Little Store... By then, once a crowd of War-Gods encircled the store, this thick-skinned old fellow can grope for fish in muddy waters. It's not like he hasn't done this in the past."

Xiao Meng nodded, but his complexion still displayed a trace of perplexity. He knew that Ji Chengxue definitely thought of what was on his mind as well.

"But this old man is quite dense, um... or perhaps he isn't clear of the ins and outs of Fang Fang's Little Store. He obviously did not gather intelligence before visiting the store." The corners of Ji ChengXue's mouth curled up. He walked to the entrance of the

main halls and stared at the featherlike snowflakes falling from the air as he coolly remarked.

"Nevermind a crowd of seventh grade Battle-Saints... even if it were eighth grade War-Gods, Owner Bu's brows won't even crease. He wanted to grope for fish in muddy waters, but will probably be frightened out of his senses once the time comes." Ji Chengxue seemed to have envisioned a comedic scene and couldn't help but emit a light chuckle.

However, Xiao Meng was not as optimistic, and couldn't help but reply: "Your Majesty... the subject of concern should not be Owner Bu's store, but the Imperial City. A flood of seventh grade Battle-Saints charging into Imperial City may not intimidate Owner Bu at all, but..."

"How I wish to give that old man a good beating... no, the blame is on me, for attracting a buttload of wasps." Ji Chengxue's complexion instantly froze. He clenched his teeth but couldn't help mutter a curse, he was seething in anger.

"General Xiao, pass down the command... Strengthen the Imperial City's defense capabilities. In addition, reinforce the inspection measures for visitors to the Imperial City and immediately report any findings of suspicious figures. When the time comes, the order and stability of the Imperial City... will have to fall in General Xiao's hands."

Xiao Meng brought his hands into a salute, and the corners of his mouth tasted a trace of bitterness. A crowd of seventh grade Battle-Saints...what a headache, that damned old scoundrel!

...

Bu Fang looked at the phenomenally beautiful woman before him with a deadpan expression. The woman carried a food container, and her body leaned against the wall as she batted her eyes as she gazed at him.

"Is she still making the ogling eyes..." Bu Fang thought in his heart.

"Owner Bu, long time no see. Did you miss me?" Seeing that Bu Fang couldn't be bothered to acknowledge her and her fluttering eyes, and that he was about to head back into the kitchen, Ni Yan clenched her teeth angrily as she asked.

"Why would I miss you? You don't owe me any crystals," Bu Fang replied soberly.

Ni Yan's complexion froze, "Does your idiot brain only ever think about crystals?"

"Senior, long time no see." Tang Yin hurriedly stepped in just in time to see Bu Fang, and instantly greeted him excitedly.

Bu Fang nodded his head at Tang Yin, and calmly said: "It's been a while indeed. Are you coming in to dine? Recently, the store has got a new dish, it tastes pretty good."

Tang Yin's face immediately lit up, "A new dish? Yeah, the Senior's cooking skill is second to none...uhh."

Tang Yin's step forward suddenly froze as he peered at the food container being carried by Ni Yan, who was glaring at him with her teeth grinding.

"Owner Bu, this is the spirit dish I just cooked, please give me your opinion on it." Yan Ni crossly walked into the store, placed the food container on the table, and said to Bu Fang in a cranky tone.

As expected, this woman was there to seek his advice. To be honest, Bu Fang was not interested in people seeking advice of this sort.

Taking a look around, Bu Fang realized that there were actually no customers at the time being, and instantly scrunched his brows.

All of a sudden, Bu Fang looked toward Tang Yin and said: "What

do you want to eat?"

Tang Yin was taken back and swiftly responded: "Oh oh... an order of the new dish, and a jar of Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine."

"Alright, please wait momentarily." Bu Fang nodded in satisfaction, then turned around to head back into the kitchen.

"Right now is business hours, I don't accept any kind of advice request. Please wait until after regular operating hours," Bu Fang said as he walked away.

Ni Yan was instantly at a loss for words. Tang Yin was also drenched in cold sweat... "Senior, you shouldn't play people like this."

Of course, Ni Yan's gaze toward his direction was stone cold.

"Little lassie, I also want to order. Give me an order of the Red Braised Meat and a jar of wine." Ni Yan took a seat on a chair and waved at Ouyang Xiaoyi, who sat not far away in boredom.

Ouyang Xiaoyi huffed, as she did not have any good impressions of this woman. But since she was ordering food, it wouldn't be right to reject her. And so she walked to the window of the kitchen and relayed the order to Bu Fang.

As Ni Yan waited for her food to arrive, she started to look around the store.

This time she stepped into the store, she felt like something was different from before. There was an exceptionally mysterious sentiment stirring inside of her heart.

This kind of exceptionally mysterious sentiment only appeared when she was undergoing cultivation, and rarely surfaced otherwise.

Ni Yan clamped her hands behind her back as she walked around the store in a hunt. After a while, she noticed the far from eye-catching earth yellow colored flower pot in the corner. A tiny

burgeoning sapling erected from the flower pot.

The green leaves were covered with mystifying patterns.

"This...this is a Path-Understanding Tree?" Ni Yang blanched, as she never imagined that Bu Fang would grow a Path-Understanding Tree in his store.

She evidently knew about Path-Understanding Trees, as there was one growing in the Celestial Arcanum Sect. The Path-Understanding Tree was categorized into three types, one-stripe, three-stripes, and five-stripes. Ancient works also recorded Path-Understanding Trees with even more stripes, but those only existed in legends.

The Path-Understanding Tree in the Celestial Arcanum Sect had leaves that were over hundreds of years old. As they swayed about, they emitted a mystifying wave of energy. Disciples of the Celestial Arcanum Sect frequently sat cross-leggedly under the Path-Understanding Tree to undergo cultivation, as it gave them a higher chance of reaching a breakthrough.

"Five stripes... these leaves have five stripes, this is a Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit Tree?!" Ni Yan counted the patterns on the leaves, and her exceedingly beautiful eyes widened in bewilderment.

Oh gosh, now this was a wonder! There was actually a Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit Tree in this store!

No wonder there was that exceptionally mysterious sentiment. This was the first time she had seen an alive Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit Tree.

"Could this be the so-called good fortunes mentioned by the Supreme Elder?" A thought flashed through Ni Yan's mind, and her heart jolted.

The Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit Tree, once blossomed, would bear the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit. This was

the spirit fruit that, once ingested, could aid one to a possible revelation, or even break through to the echelon of eighth grade War-God...

Just as Ni Yan became dumbfounded, Bu Fang had finished cooking the dishes and sauntered out of the kitchen.

"New dish, Rainbow-Colored Water Dumpling, please enjoy." Bu Fang placed the Rainbow-Colored Water Dumpling in front of Tang Yin. Ouyang Xiaoyi tailed him, scuttled in with a jar of Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine, and also placed it before Tang Yin.

"Thank you Senior." Tang Yin politely expressed his gratitude.

"Owner Bu, you... you're actually growing a Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit Tree in your store? You've got quite a bold.... nerve!"

Ni Yan twisted her head and halted Bu Fang, who was ready to head back to the kitchen, with her carefully enunciated words.

Chapter 191: Only For Afforestation

"You said this tree is called the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Tree?" Bu Fang gazed at Ni Yan, and asked.

"Surely you aren't unaware of the name of this tree, right?" Ni Yan's lovely eyes widened, an air of astonishment across her face. Her dedicated cherry lips pursed, red and shiny, extremely adorable.

"You don't even know what this tree is called, then why are you growing it in your store?"

Bu Fang curled his lips, "I only wanted to enhance the afforestation of the store."

Bu Fang seemed composed, but Ni Yan was speechless, thinking, "Do you know how valuable is the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Tree? Enhancing the store's afforestation... way to go my dear owner." Perhaps only someone as peculiar as Bu Fang would plant a Five Stripes Path-Understanding Tree without ulterior motives, for reasons none other than improving the store's afforestation.

"I have a Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit, could there be any relations between the two?" Bu Fang asked in confusion. This was the first time he learned of the sapling's name.

The old man from yesterday... even though he also seemed to know the name of this tree, by the looks of the old man, his intentions were not pure, and maybe he even wanted to have this sapling.

This goddamned... this was his store's afforestation!

"This tree is called the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Tree. The fruits it bears are naturally called the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit. It is not comparable to the Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit, as they are simply not on the same level," Ni Yan muttered.

"The Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit can at most increase the probability of a sixth grade Battle-Emperor reaching seventh grade Battle-Saint. But the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit can enhance the probability of a seventh grade Battle-Saint reaching eight grade War-God... There is a world of difference between their values."

Bu Fang was startled. In this sense, this sapling seemed quite out of the ordinary.

"If anyone catches news that there is a Five Stripes Path-Understanding Tree growing in your store, not after long, your store will be surrounded by a hoard of frenzied, manic seventh grade Battle-Saints," Ni Yan explained.

"Oh, not a problem," Bu Fang coolly replied.

Ni Yan was taken back. "Where is your self-assuredness coming from? We're talking about a swamp of seventh grade Battle-Saints... not a crowd of first grade warriors! Dear brother, can we take this seriously?"

Having learned of this tree's name, Bu Fang no longer enquired Ni Yan. Under the latter's bewildered gaze, he immediately turned around to head back to the kitchen.

Ni Yan was rather speechless. Perhaps Bu Fang really felt like he had nothing to fear, but a hoard of seventh grade Battle-Saints... Just envisioning this scene gave her the chills.

Reluctant to part with the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Tree, Ni Yan gave it another glance before returning to her seat. Not after long, a meaty fragrance emanated from the kitchen, out of which a plate of plump, fragrant Red Braised Meat was brought out.

When it came to food, any of Ni Yan's lingering attachment to the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Tree was tossed into the winds. What was left in her eyes was the glossy, flushed Red

Braised Meat.

She poured a cup of Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine. Eating meat while drinking wine, now this was the life.

The only blemish in an otherwise flawless moment was that the Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine could not surpass the old drunkard's Dragon's Breath. If the wine could be switched to Dragon's Breath, then that would truly be perfection.

Just as Ni Yan and the others were enjoying their gourmet delicacies, the sound of footsteps echoed from the alleyway.

Xiao Meng held his body erect as he approached the store and strode in with wide steps.

"Uncle Xiao." Ouyang Xiaoyi perkily greeted him. Her eyes betrayed a sense of confusion. Why would Xiao Meng come here? He really was a rare guest.

"Where is Owner Bu?" Xiao Meng nodded at Xiaoyi and then asked.

Ouyang Xiaoyi pointed at the kitchen. Xiao Meng did not speak another word, found a seat next to the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Tree, and examined it from a close proximity.

"Uncle Xiao, what would you like to eat?" Xiaoyi asked.

"A jar of the Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine." Xiao Meng's gaze was still fixated on the Path-Understanding Tree as he carelessly blurted out an order.

"Uncle Xiao... Today's three jars of Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine have been sold out."

"Huh?" Xiao Meng was stumped, then slowly lifted up his head, glanced at Ouyang Xiaoyi, then peered at Ni Yan, who was drinking wine and eating meat from afar. His pupils suddenly shrank.

Members of the Celestial Arcanum Sect were there already?!

Xiao Meng took in a deep breath and ordered the Rainbow-Colored Water Dumpling.

Ni Yan felt as if someone was observing her and promptly lifted her head to give Xiao Meng a glance, but wasn't bothered by him and thus went back to devouring her gourmet delicacies.

"This is the second seventh grade Battle-Saint..." Xiao Meng thought quietly in his heart. "The Third Elder of the Celestial Arcanum Sect, a strong warrior within the seventh grade Battle-Saint echelon, in addition to the Ghost Chef Wang Ding, similarly a hard match among the seventh grade Battle-Saints. At present, the number of seventh grade Battle-Saints in the Imperial City is steadily growing. "

Bu Fang walked out of the kitchen carrying a plate of Rainbow-Colored Water Dumplings. Xiao Meng merely cast a deep glance at Bu Fang, but did not utter a single word. He did not ask about the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Tree.

Once done with his meal, Xiao Meng left in a haste.

Ni Yan, on the other hand, would not leave Bu Fang alone. She took out her dish for advice seeking, yet the results were not surprising, as she got harshly criticized by Bu Fang.

Once Bu Fang turned on the switch for critiquing, he became extremely chatty. Words kept on jumping out of his mouth as he meticulously listed out every single fault on the dish.

Ni Yan ultimately took away her food container in a huff and left with Tang Yin.

Bu Fang watched as their shadows left, and then calmly stood by the entrance. He let out a short breath as he gazed at the whirling snow falling from above.

...

Time was passing in a flash.

The temperature of the Imperial City was rising, less snowflakes drifted in the air, and on some days one could even feel the warmth of the sun.

The wailing wind also became much more gentle. Even though it still felt like cuts through the skin when it breezed by, it wasn't half as bad as during the late winter times.

The Imperial City didn't change much during this month, except for the number of guards in the city, which increased, especially those in armor.

There was a horde of strange faces entering the Imperial City, many of whom came from different parts of the Light Wind Empire. Each of them had a strong level of true energy, and most were fifth grade Battle-Kings or sixth grade Battle-Emperors...

This surge of warriors induced the Imperial City to enhance its defensive measures. As the head of Imperial City security force, Xiao Meng felt deeply anxious.

Xiao Yue, the study.

Xiao Yue leaned by the door frame and played with the sharp sword in his hands. He said in a hoarse voice to Xiao Meng, who sat at the desk reading a confidential report: "Given reliable information, the Elder of the Liu family from Yuzhou city has arrived at the Imperial City last night. Apparently, he battled with the Thirteen Thieves from Mozhou city right outside of the Imperial City..."

"The Elder of the Liu Family, the seventh grade Battle-Saint who has one foot in the grave?" Xiao Meng put down the confidential report, rubbed his eyes, and lightly remarked.

"Em, correct, the Thirteen Thieves have passable cultivation levels. But once they joined hands, they could repress the Elder of the Liu Family." Xiao Yue softly flicked the long sword in his hands, it produced a light crispy sound that echoed through the

entire study.

"With one foot in the grave, his conditions are no longer comparable to the times of his peak. The Elder of the Liu Family now is perhaps only slightly stronger than a typical sixth grade Battle-Emperor. It is then quite normal that he was repressed by the Thirteen Thieves. Anything else suspicious?" Xiao Meng asked.

"The Elder of the Void Sword Pavilion is back... This is news that I recently received, not yet verified, but it has a high chance of being accurate," Xiao Yue announced solemnly.

The Elder of the Void Sword Pavilion... Xiao Meng meditated for a while. This was a classic seventh grade Battle-Saint. He shook heaven and earth at a young age, but later seemed to have demonized whilst undergoing cultivation. Everyone thought he had already fallen, so it was unbelievable that he reentered the picture now. This Elder of the Void Sword Pavilion was one of the few remaining Battle-Saint elders who did not belong to the Celestial Arcanum Sect.

"Including this elder, it should be the fifteenth Battle-Saints that we know of?"

Xiao Yue smacked his lips. Seventh grade Battle-Saints... seemed rare when they rested in seclusion, but once they popped up there were so many of them. It was as if all of the seventh grade Battle-Saints in the Light Wind empire had gathered together.

In the Imperial City nowadays... one wouldn't dare to be too arrogant toward anyone whilst walking down the streets, because it was likely that person just might be a sixth grade Battle-Emperor.

The rich dandies of the Imperial City have learned their lessons after suffering a few losses, and have decided to stay indoors these days.

"Alright, you can continue the investigation. Whenever there is

news of a seventh grade Battle-Saints, notify me immediately," Xiao Meng said to Xiao Yue, then stood up and emitted a long sigh.

Xiao Yue nodded his head. The tip of his foot tapped the floor, and suddenly, with a flash of the sword, he disappeared from sight.

...

In a luxurious manor within the Imperial City, the Ghost Chef Wang Ding sat by the table, on which there were a few plates of appetizers and a jar of wine he made himself. He poured a cup and drank to himself.

After the Ghost Chef drained the wine in the cup, the deep wrinkles on his face trembled.

"It's been a month, the strong forces of energy within the Imperial City have multiplied... just as this old fellow had expected. Once the news of the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Tree was out, not one seventh grade Battle-Saint could keep their cool. It is still unclear how much time is needed for the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Tree to grow, but it should be soon. If that store is able to accelerate the growth of the Path-Understanding Tree, then it won't be long before it is ripe."

Slowly pouring another cup of wine for himself, the Ghost Chef peered at the opaque wine nectar, and his lips curled.

"The fish has arrived, but the water isn't muddy enough yet."

Chapter 192: Battle-Saints Scattered About

Outside of the Imperial City, a crowd slowly approached. The sounds of horse-drawn carriage wheels rolling by echoed in the air.

Among this troop, strong waves of energy rose and fell, as everyone was greatly spirited and vigorous, with their eyes nearly emitting beams of light.

Among this assembly was a gigantic prisoner's cage, within which there were three figures captive...

If Bu Fang was present for this particular moment, he would have definitely recognized the silhouettes of these three figures, since they were too unusual. Unlike normal humans, the lower halves of these three figures were slithering like snakes.

"Brother Ah Ni, is this the Imperial City of the Light Wind Empire?" A timid voice arose within the cage.

The serpent-man covered in wounds lightly twisted his torso, and instantly grimaced in pain as he took in a chilled breath.

"From the conversations of these guys, it seems like this is it..." Ah Ni's burly upper body was covered with scars and bruises. He had a weak breath, but still forced his face into a smile as he responded.

Yu Fu nodded. She peered at her father Yu Feng, who laid next to her with his eyes tightly shut, and couldn't help but emit a sigh.

"Even though with added speed it would only take half a month to get from the serpent-men tribe to the Imperial City of the Light Wind Empire, that is only in theory. Uncle Yu Feng knew long ago that half a month was simply not enough, thus sealed off the spirit essence within his body, and went into dormancy. Uncle Yu Feng is fine, don't worry Yu Fu." Ah Ni comforted her.

Yu Fu nodded. She naturally knew the purpose of her father entering the dormant state.

Ah Ni straightened his body, gazed through the bars of the cage and witnessed the towering city walls and enormous city gates of the the Imperial City.

"It really is more majestic than our tribe... it is almost incomparable. The creative capacity of humans is unbelievable."

Just as Ah Ni was immersed in revelation, the cage was ferociously smacked, and it emitted a thundering vibration.

"Away with the chitter chatter, keep it down." A peevish voice arose from outside of the cage.

Ah Ni's face flushed red, and his hands formed a throbbing fist, but then relaxed after a bit.

The three of them had left the Illusory Spirit Swamp and met this group of people once they entered the boundaries of the Light Wind Empire. Ah Ni was dauntless at first, since he had a cultivation level of sixth grade Battle-Emperor, and had nothing to fear. But...within this small assembly of people, there was actually a seventh grade Battle-Saint.

At that moment, Ah Ni was stupefied. In the face of a seventh grade Battle-Saint, he was naturally repressed. Uncle Yu Feng was also in dormancy, and thus the three of them were imprisoned within the cage, and escorted under supervision to the Imperial City.

But Ah Ni was actually grateful deep down, as the destination of this crowd was the Imperial City. If it were any other place, it really would have messed things up for Uncle Yu Feng.

Boom Boom Bang!

The surface of the grounds trembled. Ah Ni's pupils shrank as he peered to the left and caught sight of a gigantic spirit beast galloping by.

It was a fiery red lion, with its ferocious buckteeth were as sharp as razor-edged swords.

"Seventh grade spirit beast... Fire Lion!" Ah Ni's pupils shrank.

The group that had imprisoned them also broke out into conversation.

The Fire Lion roared. Its growl was thunderous, and spurred restlessness and fear among the spirit beast horses of this group of people.

"Arrived at the Imperial City of the Light Wind Empire at last. If it weren't for Lil' Fire larking constantly, we would've gotten here much early if we hurried up." A helpless voice rang behind the Fire Lion, and a delicate red-gowned figure revealed himself.

The sound of heavy footsteps faded. The Fire Lion, with the red-gowned man on its back, disappeared within the Imperial City.

This was a terrifying combination, a seventh grade Battle-Saint with a seventh grade spirit beast, it was frightening... Could it be that Battle-Saints were scattered about the Imperial City of the Light Wind Empire?

Ah Ni was flabbergasted inside.

"Fellows from the Imperial Beast Hall of the Third Godly Temple of the Wildlands? Certainly menacing enough..." A hoarse, scratchy mutter resonated. Ah Ni could detect that this was the seventh grade Battle-Saint among the group who had injured him. His name was something like Tian Xuzi, and his skills with the sword were astonishing. Merely one lash of his sword's spirit smothered Ah Ni into losing his wind.

A falcon's bellow reverberated sonorously from above. The crowd consciously lifted their heads, and felt as if the skies were completely blanketed.

A larger-than-life falcon fluttered its wings and glided in the air. The shadow of a figure leaped off from the back of the falcon and landed amongst the assembly, once again stirring agitation within this group's spirit beast horses.

It was a young maiden with a slim figure, and her hair pulled back into a slick ponytail. She was dressed in a warrior's robe, and a longbow lay behind her shoulders.

The maiden gazed at her surroundings in perplexity, as if she had lost her sense of direction. After a while she finally remembered something and waved at the gigantic falcon hovering overhead, "Brother Diao, go have fun up there, I'll call you when I'm ready to leave."

With a blaring bawl, the falcon's eyes suddenly rolled. Its wings flapped, and with the howling of the fierce winds, it shot straight for the clouds.

The maiden smiled bashfully, flickered a glance at the crowd behind her, gave them a light nod, and skipped toward the Imperial City.

Ah Ni was afraid to even emit a breath. "God damn it... another seventh grade spirit beast, another seventh grade Battle-Saint... and why were they all so freakin' young?" This Imperial City was truly formidable!

"Seventh grade spirit beast, the Wind-Thunder Spirit Falcon... This maiden's background, is not that simple." The hoarse voice rang again. Ah Ni could hear the tremble in his voice... evidently, this old man was also intimidated.

"Brother Ah Ni, we are at the Imperial City. Could I wake up father now?" Yu Fu asked.

Ah Ni was slightly distracted, and the corners of his mouth twitched. "Damn it... they've got a seventh grade Battle-Saint here as well." The seventh grade Battle-Saints he had seen today were more than Ah Ni had encountered in the past dozen years.

Indeed goes the saying, it's such a big world, and one should explore it... or else how could one realize how insignificant and negligible they were?

"Wake him... or else we won't be able to escape from this group," Ah Ni said with a bitter smile.

Yu Fu's eyes slightly sparkled. Then she took out a spirit herb, tore it into pieces, and stuffed it into the serpent-man Yu Feng's mouth.

...

"Reporting! General, another crowd of numerous seventh grade Battle-Saints has entered the Imperial City..."

"Reporting! General Xiao, a seventh grade Battle-Saint entered the Imperial City riding a seventh grade spirit beast..."

"Reporting! General Xiao, at the gate of the Imperial City, there is an alien species Battle-Saint fighting with a human Battle-Saint..."

...

Xiao Meng's head almost exploded just by listening to the soldiers' reports and he couldn't help but pat his cheeks. In a month's time, the number of Battle-Saints in the Imperial City had reached an unprecedented level that made Xiao Meng's heart tremble.

He had no idea where all of these Battle-Saints popped up from.

"Your Majesty, oh Your Majesty... Your humble servant does not feel so confident." Xiao Meng smiled bitterly. For the sake of the Imperial City's order and stability, Ji Chengxue had even paid a visit to the imperial mausoleum and invited back eunuch Lian Fu. However, even with two Battle-Saints on duty, it still felt unsettling.

The waters of the Imperial City, was getting muddier and muddier.

...

Bu Fang opened shop, placed the Sweet 'n' Sour Ribs before Blacky, and retreated to the kitchen. Today he felt unnerved

inside, because given his calculations, with a month's time, the spirit wine within the cabinet should be done brewing.

A spirit wine brewed with three kinds of seventh grade spirit herbs. Even he himself couldn't help but stir in anticipation.

However, he was not in a hurry and continued practicing his cutting and carving skills. After such a long period of practice, his cutting and carving abilities have improved immensely.

After Bu Fang finished practicing his cutting and carving, the sounds of footsteps echoed from the doors. Fatty Jin and his heavysset troops had arrived as usual.

A day's business began once again. After Fatty Jin was the cheerful Ouyang Xiaoyi, as well as Juan'Er, who hasn't appeared in ages, holding a food container.

Luo Sanniang followed the two figures and buoyantly walked toward the store.

"Owner Bu, long time no see. Juan'Er and I are back again! This time, Juan'Er's Egg Tarts are bound to conquer your heart!" Luo Sanniang shouted loudly once she stepped through the doors, extremely assured.

Bu Fang slowly sauntered out of the kitchen, coolly glanced at this woman, and didn't say anything.

Fatty Jin and his crowd finished their meals and bid farewell to Bu Fang, who gently nodded his head to them in return.

Once they had left, Bu Fang finally turned to Juan'Er and said: "This is your last chance. Are you sure your Egg Tarts have reached my level of standards and expectations?"

Juan'Er clutched her food container. Her babydoll face exhibited a trace of resolution and confidence as her head nodded fiercely.

Ouyang Xiaoyi and Luo Sanniang all hovered around in curiosity.

Luo Sanniang had tried Juan'Er Egg Tarts herself and was

absolutely subdued by them. Luo Sanniang was sure that if even these Egg Tarts couldn't reach Bu Fang's expectations, then it was Owner Bu who was messing with them!

Juan'Er slowly lifted the lid of the container, revealing the golden yellow toned Egg Tarts within. She carefully took them out and placed them in front of Bu Fang.

A rich creamy aroma suffused, litting up Bu Fang's eyes.

Thump Thump Thump.

Just as Bu Fang was about to give the Egg Tarts a try, a wave of clamorous footsteps, along with a condescending sneer, echoed from the alleyway.

"The Five Stripes Path-Understanding Tree is in this cornered little store? A trash of a store like this, I can smash it into bits with just one hand..."

Chapter 193: Whitey, Strip Him and Throw Him Out

Zhao Musheng, with a large cape draped over his shoulders, set his foot on the Imperial City's bedrock stones. He held his head high and the corners of his lips curled up.

Having left the Imperial City for so many months, he was nostalgic for the air here. After all, he had stayed in this Imperial City for so long, to the point where he almost believed he was originally from here.

The bustle and hustle on the streets remained the same, but in comparison to before, the security enforcement of the Imperial City increased. There were soldiers in armors patrolling everywhere.

On the streets of the Imperial City, there were more people oddly dressed and those with strong forces of energy. Zhang Musheng knew that these people were there for the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Tree. Once this news leaked, it attracted not just seventh grade Battle-Saints, but also sixth grade Battle-Emperors and fifth grade Battle-Kings, who lost their minds over this temptation and heedlessly charged into the Imperial City of the Light Wind Empire.

Zhao Musheng held only one attitude toward all of this: the more the better, and to muddy the waters of the Imperial City as much as possible. Or else how would some be able to grope fishes out of murky waters or act on opportunities remotely?

Suddenly, Zhao Musheng stopped his steps, and his gaze landed on the three shadows far away.

Those nearby looked strangely at the three silhouettes, completely shocked and extremely curious.

"Serpent-men tribe..." Zhao Musheng muttered, rather intrigued.

The serpent-men tribe was situated in the Illusory Spirit Swamp. It was a long journey from the Illusory Spirit Swamp to here, so why did these serpent-men bother coming and making fools of themselves? Was it also for the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Tree?

Among these three serpent-men, two appeared fairly wretched, with weak forces of energy, and blood all over their bodies. The scale on their lower halves were also gushed open in many places. It was an awfully hideous sight.

The serpent-woman supported the other two, and panic was written all across her face as she stood helplessly on the street.

This was kind of fascinating... Zhao Musheng's lips curled, and he marched straight to the three serpent-men.

...

That unruly and wild, conceited and ignorant declaration reverberated within the small alleyway and hit Bu Fang's ears. Everybody in the store was dumbfounded.

Able to smash the store into bits with just one hand... Who on earth was this guy, daring to be so formidable?

Luo Sanniang smacked her lips in bewilderment. She had witnessed the frightfulness of Bu Fang's store. The person emboldened to voice such nonsense, how powerful could he be?

Bu Fang heard this claim, but was only slightly taken back, and then continued to pick up Juan'Er's Egg Tarts.

The top of the Egg Tarts were rich and creamy, and a waft of fragrance assailed one's nostrils. Its fluffy appearance was incredibly adorable. Just in terms of its external looks, it had reached Bu Fang's expectations.

"Owner Bu... someone is here to make trouble, aren't you going to do something about it?" Luo Sanniang peered at Bu Fang, who looked like he intended to continue tasting this Egg Tart, and

couldn't help but remind him.

Even though she felt like the crowd outside filled with wild talks were a silly bunch, wasn't it rather disrespectful for Owner Bu to completely ignore them...

The sound of footsteps echoed, and numerous shadows blocked the store's entrance.

Those figures wore identical uniforms, and the amount of energy on their bodies was extremely powerful. The leader was a man carrying a big knife. His visage was filled with ferocity.

"Hey oh, this is a damn little store... Whoever is in charge, come out!" The ferocious man shouted out aggressively.

Afterwards... the interior of the store retained its peaceful tranquility. Nobody bothered taking notice of this man.

It felt like a heap of crows smashed into his head as they flew by, such the awkwardness.

This man's brows instantly scrunched. His big knife chopped at the floor, emitting sparks as the metal hit the ground.

"Damn it! Are you deaf? I am the seventh bandit of the Thirteen Bandits of Mozhou. If you have your senses, then get your ass out here. Or else I'll turn your little store into a pile of rubbles." The man yelled loudly.

A light breeze blew past, but there was still no response.

Oh, just the big black dog lying by the front of the store slightly stirred. He licked his extended paws, flicked the man a look, and returned to his previous position.

"Outrageous! Have you no respect for me, the seventh master!" The seventh master glared with his eyes, raised the knife, and strode into the store.

Behind him, a group of sycophants followed along with an air of arrogance. There was a rich life ahead following the seventh

master. This was their experience so far.

Bu Fang took a bite of the Egg Tart, and its soft texture provoked his taste buds. The rich creamy aroma, along with the Egg Tart, flooded his mouth. As he continued chewing, the fragrance burst forth.

"Where is the shop owner? Damn it! How dare you ignore me!"

The seventh master bulged his eyes, stepped into the store, and bellowed as he breathed heavily.

Everyone in the store glanced at him in astonishment, blinking their eyes. The atmosphere was somewhat awkward.

Bu Fang took another bite of the Egg Tart, and nodded as he ate it. He was obliged to admit that the Egg Tart Juan'Er made this time had truly reached his expectations. After all, it took a month's time of studying and making, which fully indicated Juan'Er's passion in making Egg Tarts.

Taking in a light breath, Bu directed his gaze at Juan'Er, and calmly said: "The taste is not bad. Even though there are still many flaws, it has satisfied my expectations at last. In a bit, I will teach you all of the important steps in making Egg Tarts."

"Hey... the pretty face boy blabbering away! Are you not freaking aware that I am here?" The seventh master waved his knife, brought about a fierce wave of wind, and pointed directly at Bu Fang.

Each of the Thirteen Bandits of Mozhou had mighty levels of cultivation and had achieved the highest standing of sixth level Battle-Emperor. At the Mo province, they were notorious for being the tyrannous regional overlords. This time, the band of three brothers made their advance on the Imperial City, precisely for the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Tree.

If they could obtain the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Tree, the degree of difficulty for the thirteen brothers to reach seventh

level Battle-Saint would easily shrink. At that point, with thirteen Battle-Saints, the Mo province would reach supremacy, and could even look down on the entire Light Wind Empire.

Bu Fang put down the Egg Tart in his hands and his glance concentrated on the knife-waving seventh master.

"If you want to order food, check the menu behind you," Bu Fang said with a deadpan face.

The seventh master's face froze, and then he quickly burst into laughter. He looked at Bu Fang as if he was staring at an idiot.

"Have you brat been freaking scared out of your wits? Do I look like I'm here to eat in your store? Haha! I'm here for the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Tree! Don't freaking act dumb with me." The seventh master glowered, with malice written all over this face.

Behind Bu Fang, Juan'Er was shocked by this grotesqueness. Her face was white as a sheet.

Luo Sanniang twitched her mouth, consoled Juan'Er, and silently cursed this seventh master, "what an idiot..."

Bu Fang's complexion exposed an utmost bafflement. As the month passed, this was the first time he had witnessed someone standing so aggressively in front of him and demanded that he handed over the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Tree... It seemed like the storm quietly brewing in the past month was finally about to erupt.

But... Bu Fang checked out this seventh master with a glance, and discovered that he was merely a sixth level Battle-Emperor. What happened to the so called Battle-Saints?

"If you're not ordering food, then get the hell out."

Bu Fang couldn't be bothered to say more, and turned around to head back to the kitchen as he coolly replied.

Get the hell out if he was not ordering food? Hey oh? Who would have thought this pretty-faced boy was so blatantly insolent. It had been years since anyone dared speak to him, the seventh master, with such a tone. A few days ago, old man Liu accidentally offended the thirteen brothers, and got beaten the crap out of him. This pretty-faced boy... was he seeking death?

The seventh master's ferocious face trembled. He marched forward and extended his meaty hands toward Bu Fang.

He really couldn't ease the anger within without giving those who were even cockier than him a good beating.

"How dare you be so pompous before me, the seventh master. You're looking for trouble!"

Luo Sanniang, seeing that the seventh master was actually going to make a move, stared daggers and decided to strike. But before she even had an instant to summon her true energy, she felt a fierce gust of wind howling by.

Bang!

The seventh master's paw was blocked by a gigantic robotic lump.

Bu Fang came to a halt, and did not turn his head as he calmly said: "Whitey, strip him and throw him out."

Whitey protruded its chubby belly and its robotic eyes flashed with a red light as it robotically stated: "Troublemaker, you will be stripped as an example to others."

The seventh master's mouth twitched. What the hell was that? What was this robotic lump?

"Strip your ass! Get the hell over here!"

The seventh master scowled, his face filled with barbarity as he waved the huge knife in his hand, aiming it mercilessly at Whitey's round robotic head.

Ping! A crispy sound of collision rumbled in the store...

The seventh master's shuddered and his face blanched as he blinked his eyes. The fierce barbarity on his face instantly eroded.

The huge knife that slashed at the robotic lump's head was bent out of shape. A huge chunk was missing from the knife's blade...

Whitey's round head remained adorable, and there wasn't even a scratch.

"Troublemaker, you will be stripped as an example to others," Whitey robotically said as the red beams from its eyes blinded the seventh master.

Chapter 194: Simple and Unpretentious Stripping

The seventh master's ferocious face trembled and his mouth opened up in shock, wide enough to fit a huge tomato.

His knife, the one that he crafted out of precious, energy-loaded metal, actually... bent?!

How tough was the puppet before his eyes? With a swing of the knife... a huge chunk went missing, and more importantly, it was bent out of shape!

The red beam that flashed across his face unnerved him, but he quickly recovered, growling and grimacing at Whitey. With a loud clang, he threw the large knife in his hands aside.

"Damn it! Aren't you badass! Aren't you tough!" With a rip, the seventh master tore apart his shirt, revealing his bulky muscles, which were covered in dragon-like blue veins. Countless streaks of scars, like centipedes crawling about, made a ghastly sight.

"I stood on the tip of knives as I fought for my life in the barbaric lands of Mozhou. Would I fear a robotic lump like you?!" The seventh master slammed a fist onto his chest, emitting a loud, muffled thud, as he bellowed at Whitey.

Boom!

As he howled, true energy burst out of the seventh master's body. His true energy was fierce, as if wild winds were roaring, brewing a storm that circled around him.

"Go to hell!"

The seventh master boomed. His entire body shook as he lifted a fist and aimed at Whitey, who continued standing still. This punch felt terrifyingly powerful, and even the air sounded like it was being ripped apart.

This was a punch that concentrated all of the seventh master's spirit energy. One should not be fooled by its simple appearance; it had much deeper implications. This punch contained a type of martial technique, in which there were traces of true energy circulating and at work. Once the punch landed, it would create a dreadful explosion!

This was the special martial technique of the Thirteen Bandits of Mozhou, Exploding Punch.

Luo Sanniang could feel the force and pressure from this punch, and her face instantly changed. For her, this punch exuded an unparalleled strength, beingsimply terrifying. It must be noted that she was a sixth grade Battle-Emperor herself, yet here was a being from the same echelon that presented a blow to her confidence to resist...

Whitey's robotic eyes continued to twinkle, its red beam flickering away.

Facing this punch, it actually stood still.

"Die!!!" The seventh master's face twisted into a ferocious look. His fist ripped through the air and smashed down mercilessly.

Boom!!

With a loud pound, the seventh master's punch fell on Whitey's plump belly without any reservation.

The belly sank in, and the seventh master's lips lightly curled up as he uttered a single word, "Explode!"

Bang!!

A earsplitting noise shook the eardrums of everyone nearby, making their hearts beat faster. It was an explosion comparable to that of thunder storms, causing their entire bodies to tremble.

The seventh master took two steps back and laughed uncontrollably.

"Damn it! A metallic lump acting all badass in front of the seventh master. Today, you'll learn what the seventh master is made of!"

Bu Fang reached the entrance of the kitchen, heard the ear-piercing laughing, and knitted his brows into a frown. He flickered a glance at the guffawing seventh master, and coolly said: "Whitey, stop playing around and throw him out directly. It bothers my eyes just to look at him."

The sound of machinery whirred as Whitey's robotic head slightly tipped downward, the red beam from its mechanic eyes targeted the seventh master.

Whitey's sunken belly also gradually recovered under the gaze of the seventh master.

Bang!

Suddenly, Whitey's palm landed on the seventh master, who instantly felt a huge pressure. His entire body knelt onto the ground, his knees in a splitting pain as he grimaced and scowled.

"Rip!!"

The crispy sound of clothes being torn apart rang. The seventh master felt a cool breeze traveling through his lower body, and a terrible force smashing onto his body.

Spoosh Spoosh!

The seventh master flashed across in a graceful arch and landed in the floor of the alleyway, but his clothes were nowhere to be found.

Spitting out a mouthful of blood, the seventh master was excruciatingly enraged. He covered his nether regions, which continued feeling a cool breeze. As the cold wind whistled by, he felt a balls-jerking melancholy...

The seventh master's minions gaped, dumb as wooden chickens

at the naked seventh master flying across their heads and landing meters away. Completely frightened, they envisioned ten thousand big black dogs charging towards them.

Rip! Rip!

"Troublemaker, you will be stripped as an example to others."

Whitey announced robotically, grabbing each of the minions with no effort. As their clothes swirled in the air, this group of people all drew graceful archs in the air and landed onto the icy cold alleyway. Each of them covered their nether regions, trembling as they stood up, with their faces mixed with grief and indignation.

Juan'Er turned crimson as she covered her eyes and emitted a sharp breath.

Ouyang Xiaoyi also covered her eyes, yet her fingers were open. She opened her eyes wide as she starred excitedly.

Luo Sanniang was even more direct, smacking and licking her lips as her eyes narrowed into a squint.

The seventh master felt a choking pain in his chest, why... didn't anything happen to the metal lump after being hit by his Exploding Punch? That was unreasonable!

Whitey's robotic eyes swept over them and it took a step forward.

The seventh master and his crowd instantly jumped up with fright. Covering up his nether regions, he shouted, "You... aren't you a bold one! Just you wait! Once my twelve brothers come, your little store will be smashed into pieces!"

The seventh master talked tough but then turned around to flee. It was simply humiliating. The renowned seventh master of the Thirteen Bandits of Mozhou was actually stripped and was streaking on the streets... Now this was a story that would garner some laughs.

Luo Sanniang leaned on Whitey's plump body, and tsked as she studied the seventh master's shaking pale buttocks as he darted away.

Pang Pang!

"Good one Whitey, your sister, I, likes this kind of simple and unpretentious stripping." Luo Sanniang smacked Whitey's body and laughed.

Whitey's robotic eyes turned and fell onto Luo Sanniang, whose heart instantly skipped a beat. She immediately backed away, as this was not a joke... The metal lump was the kind that resorted to stripping in the face of troubles.

Whitely quickly retreated to the kitchen and didn't make another appearance. It was Bu Fang who eventually came out, carrying a porcelain plate that held four richly aromatic golden Egg Tarts.

"Alright, let's talk specifics about the Egg Tarts." Bu Fang's face was serene, as if nothing had just happened, and he said calmly.

...

"Tsk tsk! Could this be a serpent-man? That is fascinating!"

"This serpent lady looks pretty cute, should I escort her home... hehehe!"

"What are the serpent-men doing here in the human's Imperial City? Judging by their wounded figures... these must be serpent-men with a story."

...

On the streets of the Imperial City, Yu Fu supported her father and Ah Ni with a panic-stricken expression. Serpent-man Yu Feng summoned a great amount of energy earlier and recovered his Battle-Saint cultivation level. However, after battling with the Battle-Saint elder that imprisoned them, he was heavily wounded and was knocked into unconsciousness once more.

Being encircled by a crowd of curious faces, Yu Fu's heart was filled with alarm and terror.

She had arrived at the Imperial City, but did not know where Senior Bu's store was located. She wanted to ask someone for help, but didn't dare opening her mouth. The gazes of everyone nearby were filled with ill intentions.

Suddenly, the crowd split apart, an elder slowly sauntered in and glanced at her warmly.

It was as if everything near Yu Fu's ears quieted down. She could only see the figure's mouths opening and closing, yet she couldn't help but feel settled and calmed. Her entire body, as if completely out of control, followed the person's footsteps and left the crowd.

They gradually disappeared into the sea of people.

...

The Imperial City's Luxury Inn.

Blood still dripping from the corners of his mouth, the seventh master ran like the wind and charged through the doors, effectively startling the burly fellows drinking wine and eating meat in the inn.

"Oh gosh! Wasn't the pale piece of ass that just darted by good ol' seven? He... has developed quite a peculiar taste, playing with streaking now?" A husky man with a full beard hollered with gaping eyes.

Everyone else's face held odd looks, yet they couldn't help but all burst into laughter. Ol' seven streaking, now that was an interesting turn of events.

After the seventh master helped himself to some clothes and walked out of his room with a sullen face, the chortling gradually faded away. The crowd looked at him solemnly.

The seventh master gritted his teeth as he recounted what had

happened to him earlier. Those in the crowd widened their eyes as they listened, until someone finally couldn't take it anymore, slamming the table as he stood up.

"Damn it! Dare to mess with my brother, watch me peel off its metal skin!"

The Thirteen Bandits of Mozhou broke into a uproar and decided to charge to Fang Fang's Little Store for revenge.

"Listen to me and halt!"

However, just as they reached the doorstep, a stern rebuke terrified them into stopping. One by one, they shifted their gaze to the refined man who strolled out of his room.

This was the elder and also the strongest of the Thirteen Bandits of Mozhou. He had gotten half of his foot stepped into the echelon of seventh grade Battle-Saint.

"As of now, there are superior warriors hidden in the Imperial City. The number of seventh grade Battle-Saints makes one's hair stand on end, yet none has lifted a finger on the store. Why are you morons charging there with such great fanfare? You want to push yourselves into the spotlight and become the butt of the joke? Are you half-witted idiots?!"

Chapter 195: The Spirit Wine... Is Ready for Unsealing

"Brother, ol' seven suffered such a big loss. Shouldn't we go seek revenge?" A full-bearded, thickset man sounded unwilling to take their defeat lying down. The beard on his face twitched uncontrollably out of anger.

"Go seek revenge? Do you know why no seventh grade battle-saint has attempted seizing the Five Stripes Path-Understanding Tree by force yet?" Hu Yifeng flickered a glance at this crowd of brothers and sneered as he asked.

The crowd was instantly dazed. That was precisely what they couldn't understand. It was merely a small store, and the owner only had the cultivation level of a fifth grade Battle-King. He was no different than an ant in their eyes. Surely an army of seventh grade Battle-Saints wasn't afraid of a fifth grade Battle-King, right?

That was the biggest joke in the universe.

"After arriving at the Imperial City, I personally ordered someone to conduct a background check on the store. This small, seemingly insignificant store is not as simple as it appears to the eye..." Hu Yifeng took in a breath as he explained. Even though he couldn't be sure of the accuracy of such intelligence, better safe than sorry.

"The intelligence reported a mechanic puppet that can repress seventh grade Battle-Saints. There is also allegedly a so-called supreme beast lying by the entrance. The supreme beast part is likely a rumor. However, even if it isn't a supreme beast, it is at least a seventh grade spirit beast. That counts for two seventh grade Battle-Saints acting as guards. Do you have the guts to trespass a store like that?"

Hu Yifeng asked gravely as he tirelessly shared information on the store. Those in the crowd immediately gaped with widened

eyes.

The seventh master shivered, damn it... no wonder, that mechanic puppet was not a common metal lump! It could repress seventh grade Battle-Saints... it was freakin' out of this world!

"So, it's already a miracle that ol' seven made it back alive." Hu Yifeng remarked.

"Boss, but if we just call it a day, ol'seven, I, cannot be reconciled!" The seventh master clenched his teeth as he muttered. Reliving the moments of being stripped naked and recalling the balls-jerking melancholy, he felt blood shooting up his head, waiting to burst out.

Hands behind his back, Hu Yifeng walked around the room and narrowed his eyes as he calmly said: "Revenge will naturally be carried out, but we cannot be hasty... we must wait for a suitable opportunity."

...

"Oh my gosh! How terrifying... what is this monstrous beast!"

"Mama mia! There's a lion! A man-eating lion!"

"This is a spirit beast lion? How burly..."

A gigantic Fire Lion sauntered about the streets of the Imperial City, almost scorching every stone brick that was hit by its feet. The Fire Lion ran his sharp eyes over the lowly humans nearby.

With a lion's roar, he scared the wits out of numerous people, causing them to tremble in fear.

On the Fire Lion's back sat a red-robed man who chuckled as he patted the Fire Lion's head, trying to calm him down.

"Knock it off, don't frighten others." The man's voice was gentle. His eyes radiated with a sense of curiosity as he checked out the bustling Imperial City, feeling exceptionally exuberant.

Suddenly, a burly figure strolled by from afar, appearing in front

of him.

The red-robed man's pupils shrank slightly as he solemnly fixed his eyes on this burly figure. He smiled lightly as he nodded his head. This muscular man emitted an alarmingly strong force of energy, he was clearly a fierce seventh grade Battle-Saint.

"Your lordship's spirit beast is magnificent. But in the Imperial City, spirit beasts are prohibited from walking on the streets. We hope for your lordship's cooperation." Xiao Meng peered gravely at the man and beast before his eyes, his heart thudding inside.

A seventh grade Fire Lion, and a seventh grade Battle-Saint. This combination was truly unnerving.

"I am Mu Lingfeng, from... the Wildlands. I have long heard of the Imperial City's General Xiao Meng as well as your vigor and strength. Today I can say such reputation is certainly not an exaggeration." The red-robed man, Mu Lingfeng, grinned as he said.

He leaped off of the Fire Lion and gently patted its head. A magic array platter carved out of phenomenal quality jade suddenly appeared in his hands. With a flash, the Fire Lion transformed into a beam of light and entered the magic array platter.

Xiao Meng's pupils shrank once more as he took in a chilled breath. From the Wildlands and having deep knowledge of imperial beasts, could this be someone from the dreaded group of powerful forces?!

If even those people were getting involved... it truly painted a daunting future!

"This way please, your lordship. I have already arranged premier housing for your lordship," Xiao Meng said.

Mu Lingfeng flickered a meditative glance at Xiao Meng, yet did not reject the offer as he followed him unhurriedly.

...

"Miss, this jade hairpin is definitely a fine quality good. Look at the color of the material, how sparking and crystal clear it is. It is not overpriced at one gold coin!"

On the street, a seller fixed his eyes on the gawky young maiden dressed in a warrior robe as he went on promoting his products. His acute senses told him this young lady was definitely a clear target, easy to cheat given her simple-minded appearance.

"One gold coin?" The girl hesitated, sized up the jade hairpin with her eyes, and looked dazed.

The material of the jade hairpin was very plain, made up of assorted bits of jade. Could it be it had other special properties?

"Miss, I'm working with a small business here. Don't be fooled by the jade hairpin's ordinary looks as it has extremely unusual effects. Once you wear it, you'll feel serene and concentrated, an aid to your cultivation. Just one glance tells me you practice martial arts. That makes this jade hairpin even more suitable for you." The seller coaxed as his eyes tossed and turned.

Under this persuasion the maiden was rather bedazzled. The more she looked at the jade hairpin, the more she saw the so-called magical effects of the jade hairpin fed to her by the seller. Could it be this jade hairpin was really a spirit tool of some sort?

Thinking she really came across a treasure, the maiden merrily reached for her wallet, ready to pay up.

"Hey, lassie, it's been years since we last met, yet you are still so dorky and adorable."

Just as the maiden was about to fish out a gold coin, a pale, jade lotus-like arm hung over her neck. A breathtakingly beautiful face appeared next to her and smilingly remarked.

"Sister Ni Yan! What are you doing here?" The maiden studied the person who glided to her side, and instantly lit up as she exclaimed.

Ni Yan gently rubbed the lassie's head, grabbed the jade hairpin from her hands, and turned to the seller with curled lips: "Why don't you repeat what you just said?"

The seller didn't expect a phenomenally beautiful woman to suddenly appear out of nowhere. His eyes tossed and turned, ready to say something, only to see a distortion occurring in the woman's hands. The jade hairpin was actually melting at a speed visible to the naked eye.

Mama mia! The seller almost peed his pants, this woman... was a monster!

"This piece of garbage isn't even worth a copper coin, yet you have the guts to ask for a gold coin. Are you not afraid to have your teeth all knocked out?" Ni Yan coldly grumbled.

The seller felt bitter inside, but did not dare to let out a breath.

Ni Yan was bored with the cowardliness of the seller, then proceeded to leave with the maiden.

"Ye Ziling, ah Ye Ziling. Why would your master allow you to come out alone? You're the type who would get sold unknowingly and end up helping the human trafficker count money!" Ni Yan flickered a glance at the maiden next to her, who was biting into a spirit fruit, and uttered.

"I'm not afraid, he can't beat me in a fight." Ye Ziling blinked her eyes and responded with a full mouth.

"That's right, even though you're dense, you don't have a low cultivation." Ni Yan muttered, "Come on, let me take you, little foodie, to feast on gourmet delicacies."

Ye Ziling's eyes instantly brightened once she heard about delicious food, and her face enlivened with excitement.

"Master told me to seek for good fortunes in the Imperial City. Sister Ni Yan, do you know where is the good fortune?" Ye Ziling followed Ni Yan and asked in a perplexed tone.

"Who knows where it is. Who cares. If it is good fortune, then once the time comes, you'll naturally find it." Ni Yan twitched her mouth. The Supreme Elder also sent her out to find the good fortune, but who the hell knew what that meant.

The Five Stripes Path-Understanding Tree? Maybe that was it...

Outside the gates of the Imperial City, the shadows of three figures had arrived.

Wu Yunbai gazed at the majestic and towering city walls of the Light Wind Empire, squinted her eyes, and then descended from her horse. She led her spirit horse towards the Imperial City.

After a month's journey, she finally made it to the Imperial City from White Cloud Villa.

"Smelly brat... I hope you still remember the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus reserved for this lady." Wu Yunbai murmured, and then entered the city smoothly.

...

Having sent off a mirthful Juan'Er and a swamped Ouyang Xiaoyi, today's business hours finally came to an end.

Bu Fang stretched and then closed the shutters.

The Five Stripes Path-Understanding Tree in the earthen-yellow flower pot had already reached a meter in height. Bu Fang could constantly feel a peculiar sense of energy waves emerging from the tree.

Given Ouyang Xiaoyi's explanation, this wave was the enlightening morality emitted by the Path-Understanding Tree and could help enhance once's speed of cultivation and probability of obtaining enlightenment.

During her break time, Ouyang Xiaoyi would sit by this sapling to undergo cultivation.

Even though Bu Fang could feel the waves, they had no effects on

his own cultivation level. That was because his cultivation level was not dependent on such training but determined by business revenues in the form of crystals.

However, Bu Fang was still dead clear on the value of this Five Stripes Path-Understanding Tree. He returned to the kitchen, scooped up a bowl of spirit energy clear spring water, and poured it into the flower pot.

"The store's afforestation is not luxuriant enough. Drink up, and show more green." Bu Fang looked at the Path-Understanding Tree and gently said.

Retreating into the kitchen, Bu Fang practiced his cutting techniques, and then arrived before the kitchen cabinet in a composed manner.

He felt very much agitated inside. Not for any other reason, but because today was the day to taste the spirit wine brewed with three kinds of seven grade spirit herbs.

The moment he opened the kitchen cabinet, the vigorous scent of the ocean drifted about.

This was the environment set within the kitchen cabinet. Bu Fang could nearly taste the salty ocean winds.

Waving his hands around, Bu Fang thinned out the strong scent, and then landed his eyes on the gigantic jar resting soundlessly in the kitchen cabinet.

The wine jar didn't look any different from how it was last month, but Bu Fang knew that dramatic changes took place inside.

Arms around the wine jar, Bu Fang concentrated his energy, only to find that the wine jar had gained a considerable amount of weight. For a moment there, he could not lift it up.

With his brows scrunched, Bu Fang refocused with a pumped energy core, finally hoisting the wine jar out of the kitchen cabinet and placing it on the floor.

The wine jar was securely sealed with a mud cap, so tight that no wind travel through. This meant that not even a waft of the wine's scent seeped through, but this only deepened the degree of curiosity in Bu Fang's heart.

In a jumpy state of mind, Bu fang placed his hands on the mud cap, and applied a bit of pressure. With a light "bang", the mud cap was unsealed.

Chapter 196: A Wine Fragrance that Engulfed Half of the Imperial City

Bu Fang cracked open the mud cap with a light pop and was instantly hit with a burst of wine fragrance surging out of the wine jar. The aroma, as if taken the shape of enshrouding mist, gushed up Bu Fang's nose and made his taste buds tingle.

This was a remarkably rich fruit wine aroma, with a splash of sweet astringency. However, such touch of sweet astringency did not affect the fragrance of the wine one bit. Instead, the aroma became even more alluring and intoxicating.

Bu Fang opened his eyes wide, and couldn't help but swallow a mouthful of saliva in a "gulp". Afterwards, he inched his nose closer and inhaled deeply. The wine fragrance crawled up his nose like a tiny serpent and travelled through his limbs, making him all the more exhilarated.

"Such wonderful aroma! Such wonderful wine!"

Bu Fang gasped in admiration, but his countenance remained largely unchanged. That was because he utilized the "Wine within Wine, Jar within Jar" brewing method, meaning this was not yet the final end product.

Even though the wine fragrance was, at this point, quite impressive, it was merely on par with the Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine. To completely surpass it, or even compare with the "Dragon's Breath" described by Ni Yan, there was still a noticeable distance.

Bu Fang was not in a hurry. He fetched three smaller wine jars, and used a bamboo tube to scoop out the wine nectar from the bigger jar and into the smaller jars.

The bamboo tube was dipped into the wine jar. With a gentle scoop, the wine nectar rippled like a river stream. Its fragrance,

having subsided for a long time, suddenly burst forth, adding a sense of indulgence to Bu Fang's expression.

This time, the wine nectar was not clear as spring water, but presented a hue of pale yellow. The yellowness was simple and unpretentious—not the type of muddy yellow caused by a mix of impure substances, but a yellowness that was crystalized and untainted in tone.

The wine nectar from the original jar was distributed into three smaller wine jars. What was left in the bigger jar was remaining residues. Bu Fang took out a filter and poured in the leftover wine nectar, eventually filling up another half of a jar.

Having done all of this, Bu Fang felt a burning flame in his heart once more.

With a layer of true energy wrapped around his palm, Bu Fang carefully extended his hand into the wine jar. He grabbed one of the jars, which turned out to be scalding hot. In that moment, he shivered inside.

"This should be the jar with wine brewed with the Phoenix Blood Herb." Bu Fang's heart tingled. He applied force and removed the small wine jar.

The small wine jar looked smooth and slippery on the outside. If it weren't for the true energy coated over Bu Fang's palm, he would have had a hard time taking it out of the large wine jar.

The moment he pulled out the wine jar, Bu Fang was taken back, as the wine jar in his hands completely transformed. The surface of the wine jar picked up a fiery blaze of redness yet kept a crystal clear tone. Its material seemed to have totally transfigured.

Through the translucent external coating, one could basically see the insides of the wine jar. The wine nectar within presented a flame-like redness, with a hazy bed of air hovering above. Bu Fang felt quite awed inside and placed the small wine jar onto the table.

As a beam of light shone down, a gleam of redness radiated, all magnificent and enchanting.

Bu Fang tsked in exclamation, and continued covering his palm with true energy. He extended his hand, seized a bone-chilling, ice-cold wine jar, and took it out.

The wine jar has transfigured into a pale blue color, as if made of ice crystals. It emitted a hint of winter chills.

Without a question, this was the jar with wine brewed by the Ice Soul Monarch Lotus.

With the third reach, Bu Fang finally took out the last wine jar. This was the jar with wine brewed by the Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit.

The surface of this wine jar did not undergo as much dramatic changes like the last two. The three stripes of cloud shaped moires on the outside merely appeared fuller, as if clouds truly floated about, thick and undissipated.

The three wine jars resting on the table looked unique in their own ways, each a dazzling feast for the eyes.

Bu Fang dispersed the true energy in his hands, squinted at the three wine jars, and curled the corner of his lips. Now this was something.

He picked up the flame red wine jar. Its mud cap bulged, as if about to break open.

Bu Fang took in a breath lightly, and cracked open the mud cap.

"Bang!" With a loud rumble, the mud cap shot to the sky. A pounding phoenix's wail blared from the wine jar.

An outline of a fiery red phoenix spread its wings and leaped out.

In blazing flames, the silhouette twirled in the air and transformed into a vigorous blast of wine fragrance before exploding.

Bu Fang sniffed this wine aroma, and instantly felt his entire body trembling. Every particle within him buzzed dynamically. His eyes sparkled as the true energy within his body was traveling at a faster speed.

"A flame-like, rich wine fragrance! A burning sensation!"

Bu Fang thought in his heart, and then shifted his gaze to the interior of the wine jar. Without the time acceleration property of the kitchen cabinet, to reach this level of aroma, the jar of wine would have required three years of brewing. The scent spurted out, stirring one's heart.

The wine fragrance of this jar alone was rich and intense enough to diffuse and hover over the entire store. In fact, it even spread to the alleyway, pervading the air around.

Blacky, who was previously lying down, was also shaken by the wine aroma and immediately lifted up its doggy head. His eyes blinked and peered toward the inside of Bu Fang's store.

The wine nectar in the wine jar presented a fiery shade of red. Its fragrance resembled a scorching flame. With a light shake of the jar, one could faintly hear the wail of a Fire Phoenix.

Bu Fang then directed his gaze to the wine jar that looked as if it was made of ice crystals. With the mud cap unsealed, the fragrance of a wine brewed for three years also burst forth and gathered above the wine jar. It transfigured into a blooming, ice-blue lotus flower.

The aroma of this jar of wine was not burning hot, but ice cold instead. Bu Fang felt as if his entire nose was frozen by the chills, and slightly scrunched his brows.

With a gentle tap on the wine jar, the ice blue wine nectar instantly rippled. It formed waves after waves, reverberating a light, crispy echo.

Bu Fang licked his lips and then targeted the last jar, which was

made of the Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit. Unscrewing the mud cap, its effects were plain, and nothing special took place.

Bu Fang was stupefied, and pulled himself closer to observe. Suddenly, the first stripe of cloud-shaped moire scattered. As if a violent jolt of the heart, an intensely rich wine fragrance gushed out, almost knocking Bu Fang to the floor.

The wine aroma was incomparably strong, spreading everywhere. It poured out of the store and even stormed out of the small alleyway, adding an intoxicated complexion to countless people standing nearby. With a sniff, they blushed and trembled in tipsiness.

Bu Fang felt dizzy, and was still shaking from being blasted by the alcohol's strength. The second stripe of cloud-shaped moire also charged forth, forcing Bu Fang to take another step back.

As if a soundless ripple effect, the wine fragrance disseminated once more, nearly engulfing the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant.

Ni Yan, who brought Ye Ziling to feast on gourmet delicacies in the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant, suddenly froze. Her petite, delicate nose twitched vigorously and her eyes sparkled as if they were stars shining in the dark night sky.

"This wine aroma... where is it from? How could it be this rich!"

In a flash, Ni Yan immediately left the Immortal Phoenix Restaurant with Ye Ziling. Her nose continued to jerk, in search of the origin of this wine fragrance.

Once the third stripe of cloud-shaped moire of the Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit also spurted out, Bu Fang's store became a sea of wine fragrance. One sniff of the aroma made Bu Fang's complexion flush with rosiness, as if he had drunk a cup of strong wine himself.

Bu Fang circulated his true energy to suppress the tipsiness within. His eyes uncontrollably flashed with astonishment.

Who would have thought that a wine nectar brewed with these three ingredients and under such special methods would have such unexpected effects...

But... this wine nectar was still not the ultimate end product.

Bu Fang took out a jade jar and with a solemn face, poured into it half a jar of the yellow toned wine nectar from the original larger jar. Afterwards, he respectively poured in half a jar of the flame red wine jar, the ice blue wine jar, and then the Three Stripes Path-Understanding Fruit's wine jar.

He used the jade jar to mix together these three kinds of wine nectar.

The insides of the jade jar gleamed with brilliance, shaking lightly.

Bu Fang's eyes lit up. He sealed the jar with a lid, and then concentrated the true energy on his hands.

With the slam of a hand, the wine jar instantly elevated to mid-air, tossing and turning as it continued buzzing with sound.

Dong!!

The jade jar landed fiercely on the table and emitted a loud rumble. Bu Fang's forehead was covered with fine drops of sweat, his eyes burning with flames.

This wine... was finally finished.

The lid was carefully lifted from the jade jar, yet nothing spectacular or odd occurred. However, the scent was richer than ever as it streamed out, tens of thousands times stronger than those of the previous four wine aromas.

The flooding wine fragrance was vast and mighty, as if turbulent ocean waves tumbling.

In that instant, Bu Fang was utterly immersed and lost within it.

The wine aroma rolled up like flaps of the sea, its tempestuous

waves rising higher and higher. With the store as the core, it continued expanding outwards.

Ni Yan's face suddenly changed colors as she pulled Ye Ziling along. Her complexion flushed with rosiness as her entire body trembled and shivered. This wine fragrance... had changed again! It had become increasingly marvelous!

The wave-like wine fragrance permeated in all four directions. With the little store as the center, half of the Imperial City had been engulfed!

Chapter 197: Amalgamation of Fire and Ice, Like Walking On Air

Half of the imperial city was enveloped by the aroma of the wine. It was an extremely strong and bewitching aroma. With a wavelike motion, it silently spread out in a grand manner.

Somewhere close to the alleyway, both Ni Yan and Ye Ziling took a deep breath and their faces became bright red. When they turned toward each other, they saw the disbelief in each other's eyes.

"How could this wine be so fragrant?" Ni Yan muttered as she sped up and headed straight toward the location of the aroma's source.

...

Inside a luxurious inn within the imperial city, the Thirteen Bandits of Mozhou were merrily toasting each other. As they continued to drink away, their laughs incessantly resounded within the inn.

The interior of the inn was bustling with activity and was overflowing with the fragrance of food and wine.

Suddenly, an invisible wave, accompanied with an indescribable aroma, surged past the inn.

Clatter!

A loud clatter rang out. The thirteen bandits were all stunned. The wine jars in their hands dropped onto the ground and splattered wine all over the floor.

However, none of them was paying any attention to the spilled wine. They were subconsciously sniffing the air while narrowing their eyes. Their faces were filled with bliss as saliva dripped from the corners of their mouths.

"It... smells so good! Is this the aroma of a wine? It's simply

irresistible... Brothers, let's go and find this wine!"

As the thirteen bandits recovered from their surprise, they were immediately filled with excitement. The wine's aroma was simply too enticing. As martial art practitioners, they were all wine lovers and the aroma of the wine had lured out the wine bugs in their stomachs.

With a shout, the thirteen bandits all charged out of the inn and headed in the direction where the aroma came from.

...

Xiao Meng was sitting in his study in the Xiao Manor. As a gust of cold wind blew in through the window, the flame of the candle swayed for a moment. He put down the ink brush in his hand and slightly rubbed his eyes with a frown...

As a bewitching wine aroma drifted into the room like a lover's caress, Xiao Meng's entire body shuddered for a moment. He opened his eyes and was filled with a sudden thirst for wine.

"What an aroma! Such a fragrance doesn't seem like something that exists in the mortal realm!"

Xiao Meng took a breath as if he wanted to inhale all of the aroma in the air. He then stood up and grabbed a thick overcoat with images of cranes sewn on it off the chair. After putting on the overcoat, he headed in the direction where the aroma came from.

...

Xiao Yue was sitting cross-legged in his room, while whitish sword energy surrounded him. As the sword energy violently surged, it unceasingly converged above his head. From time to time, the sword energy would interchange between a small sword and innumerable rays of sword energy.

Suddenly, the sword energy around Xiao Yue all dissipated with a poof. As he opened his eyes, he could not help but lick his parched lips.

"A wine... that's even more fragrant than the Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine! Oh my heavens!"

Xiao Yue's raspy voice was filled with indescribable astonishment.

As Xiao Yue inhaled the aroma in the air, he was unable to focus on cultivating anymore. With a single leap, he threw open the door with a hand gesture and flew out of the room while stepping on his sword.

"If there's such a fine wine around, how could I, Xiao Yue, be left out! Hahaha!"

...

Inside the Ouyang manor, thunder-like snoring was resounding within the room belonging to the three barbarians of Ouyang. The three brothers had a habit of sleeping together in the same room. Every night, it was as if there was a thunderstorm inside. In fact, none of the guards needed to stand guard there at night because the snoring was basically repelling burglars on its own.

Suddenly, the snoring that should have lasted for the entire night stopped and was soon replaced by the sound of lips smacking together. The eyes of the three brothers were wide open. Their nostrils expanded as they furiously inhaled the aroma in the air. Their current behavior resembled that of a dog that had just detected the smell of meat.

Bang bang bang!

The three brothers got up from their beds in complete sync with each other and put on their clothes. Saliva dripped from the corners of their mouth as they sniffed the air once more. Then, they stormed out of the room and ran straight toward the location of the aroma's source.

This night was a sleepless night for many people.

With half of the imperial city shrouded in the rich aroma, all of

the wine lovers gave chase after the extremely enticing aroma.

...

As Bu Fang wiped off the beads of sweat on his forehead, a smile appeared on his lips. He looked at the liquid inside the jade jar and suddenly let out a sigh of relief.

The four different kinds of liquid were all filled with spirit energy. In order to perfectly blend them together, it was not just a matter of stirring the mixture. He first needed to use his true energy to harmonize them.

This was not just a qualitative improvement from a quantitative change but a sort of inherent improvement.

The fragrance emanating from the jade wine jar was extremely tempting. Bu Fang was feeling a little drunk just from smelling the aroma alone. It could be imagined just how intense the wine was.

There was simply no comparison between the aroma of the Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine with the fragrance of this wine. It was like the difference between a firefly and the moon.

Of course, this was just the difference between their aroma. The actual difference in taste was not that drastic. However, the difference in the spirit energy between the two wines was even larger.

Grabbing a green jade porcelain cup, Bu Fang filled it to the brim with wine. After blending the four liquids together, the color of the wine melded together into a faint green color. The puff of vapor lingering above the cup made the wine appear extremely ethereal, like the immortal's wine served in the celestial palace.

Picking up the cup of wine, Bu Fang could not help but lick his lips as he looked at the liquid inside. He had to forcefully suppress the urge to immediately drink the wine.

A fine wine needed to be slowly savored. Bu Fang knew the logic behind "more haste, less speed" as well.

Bu Fang carefully brought the cup to his lips and softly took a sip of the wine.

The moment when the wine passed through his lips, a cool and refreshing feeling immediately spread in his mouth. As the liquid ran down his throat, it erupted like a volcano and a burning feeling coursed through his body.

Bu Fang's eyes widened. He felt as if all of the pores throughout his entire body had expanded.

As the wine entered his stomach, Bu Fang felt as if an entire ocean had surged up and completely engulfed him. The spirit energy surged violently within his stomach like an explosion. After three times in a row, Bu Fang could not help but let out a burp.

The refreshing feeling that instantly coursed through his body caused Bu Fang to narrow his eyes and slightly bare his teeth.

"How refreshing! What a fine wine!"

Without saying, this was definitely a fine wine. It was a wine that not even the Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine could compare with. No matter the taste or the aroma, it was the superior wine all-around.

After taking another sip, the invigorating feeling of coldness mixed with scorching heat gave Bu Fang an urge to exhale steam from his nostrils.

"Amalgamation of fire and ice, it almost feels like I am walking on air!" Bu Fang praised before taking another sip. In three sips, the green jade porcelain cup was completely emptied.

Slightly shaking his head, Bu Fang was feeling slightly tipsy. He only drunk a single cup of the wine and yet he was already getting drunk... The new wine's intensity was truly terrifying.

Bu Fang used his true energy to disperse the alcohol in his body and managed to sober up a little. As he ran his tongue across his lips, he stared into the jade jar with eyes burning with desire.

According to his estimation, he could probably only brew three jars of this wine in total. If he was going to put the wine on sale, he would most definitely not sell them on a per jar basis.

After all, the intensity of the wine was too strong. Even Bu Fang was almost knocked out after drinking a single cup.

After mixing part of the remaining liquid, he concocted two more jars of wine.

The rest of the liquid was then poured into Whitey's stomach. In response, Whitey only scratched its bald head while its eyes flashed for a moment.

...

"This is... I knew the aroma was coming from Owner Bu's place! I was wondering who within the imperial city could have produced such an aromatic wine... Who else other than Owner Bu could have done this!"

Ni Yan followed after the aroma of the wine and arrived before an alleyway. When she saw the familiar alleyway entrance, a sudden realization dawned on her and a sweet smile appeared on her peerless face. However, the smile soon disappeared and was replaced with a frown.

"Hmm... Owner Bu's store isn't open for business during the night. Doesn't that mean I will have to wait until tomorrow morning?!"

Just when Ni Yan was hesitating, a series of footsteps echoed in the empty street.

Ni Yan turned around in surprise and saw a group of people heading in her direction. The corners of her mouth twitched for a moment... This line-up was a little terrifying.

The thirteen bandits were at the very front. As they ran, they were vigorously sniffing the aroma in the air.

Right after the thirteen bandits was a bunch of elders. The aura emanating from these elders were extremely powerful as well. Some of them were even seventh grade Battle-Saints.

A man dressed in red was sniffing the air while running with his hands held behind his back.

An white-bearded elder carrying a longsword on his back was walking toward the store with large strides as well.

Saliva was drooling from the corners of the three barbarians of Ouyang's mouths as they walked toward the store with heavy strides, while General Ouyang Zongheng and the elderly Ouyang Qi were following behind them...

The drunkards of the Ouyang family were all present.

A light flashed past and Xiao Yue arrived on his sword. Xiao Meng, who was following after the aroma of the wine, came as well.

This was a terrifying line-up. As the group of people arrived before the alleyway entrance, they looked at each other with odd expressions on their faces.

Xiao Meng was feeling even more dumbfounded. Like he had expected, the aroma was indeed Bu Fang's handiwork. Other than Fang Fang's Little Store, he could not imagine where else the aroma could have came from.

The seventh master's complexion had turned ashen pale. This was a place that gave him unforgettable bad memories.

The group of people looked each other in the eye and started nodding toward each other as a show of friendliness. None of them said anything since they were all feeling embarrassed. After all, they were all people with high social status and yet they were chasing after the aroma of a wine in the middle of the night. Furthermore, they even ran into each other. It would be a lie to say that they were not embarrassed.

As they continued forward and stepped into the alleyway, they soon saw the tightly shut entrance of the store. The rich aroma was steadily drifting out from inside.

Everyone was astonished. It was said that the aroma of a fine wine could travel for ten miles. However, the aroma coming from the store was practically... enveloping a radius of hundreds of miles!

"What an aroma, this old man can't stand this anymore. I shall go ahead and have a taste first. My fellow friends, please feel free to take your time."

The white-bearded elder with a longsword on his back was the first to lose his patience. With a laugh, he started walking toward the store with quick strides.

"The grandmaster of the Void Sword Pavillion, Tian Xuzi!" Xiao Yue's pupils constricted for a moment. This was an expert in the path of the sword, a seventh grade Battle-Saint!

However, Xiao Yue's expression soon became odd and a derisive smirk appeared on his lips as he looked at Tian Xuzi's back figure.

Chapter 198: The Titillating Owner Bu

The fact that Tian Xuzi was a wine lover was something that every member of the Void Sword Pavillion knew.

In fact, many of those who followed the path of the sword enjoyed drinking wine. There seemed to be a unexplainable relationship between them and alcohol that created a custom for many swordsmen to love wine.

Xiao Yue was a wine lover, so he was lured over here by the aroma of the wine. Tian Xuzi was even more of a wine lover, so he lost his patience and decided to go ahead of the others.

Xiao Yue watched on in amusement. He thought, "Tian Xuzi is going ahead even though the aroma is coming from Owner Bu's store... Doesn't he know about Fang Fang's Little Store's reputation?"

Everyone else remained on the spot and watched Tian Xuzi's back figure with strange gazes as he gradually entered the alleyway.

With a longsword on his back and his robe flapping loudly in the wind, Tian Xuzi unhurriedly arrived in front of the store.

The first thing he saw was a large black dog sleeping next to the entrance.

After pondering for a moment, Tian Xuzi directed his gaze toward the tightly shut door boards. He thought, "The entrance is closed. It looks like the store isn't open for business right now."

Lifting up his hand, Tian Xuzi knocked on one of the door boards.

As the sound of knocking echoed in the alleyway, everyone started becoming nervous and their gazes became even more serious.

After knocking for a while, Tian Xuzi's expression darkened... because not even the slightest sound was coming from within the

store. This meant that the owner of the store was ignoring him and could not even bother to open the store.

"How dare he ignore me! However, it might be because he doesn't know that I am the one knocking on the door..." Tian Xuzi thought with a sullen expression.

Therefore, Tian Xuzi cleared his throat and said, "Store owner, this is Tian Xuzi from the Void Sword Pavillion. I suddenly smelled the wine aroma coming from your store, so I specially came here tonight to purchase your wine. Would you please open the door."

Tian Xuzi's voice loudly echoed in the quiet alleyway.

However, after a long while, there was still no response. The entrance of the store was still tightly closed and there was not even a slightest indication of the door boards moving.

Tian Xuzi finally lost all of his patience. His expression turned sour as he coldly said, "Even though I am sincerely trying to purchase your wine, are you not even going to give me a reply? Is my stature not even enough for you to open the store?"

Tian Xuzi, the grandmaster of the Void Sword Pavillion, was one of the strongest within the Light Wind Empire in his youth. Even though he was now much older, his might had not waned in the slightest. Many tales relating to him were still circulating within the empire.

A smirk appeared on Xiao Yue's face. He was amused by Tian Xuzi's words... He thought, "Honestly speaking, your stature is indeed not enough for Owner Bu to open the store."

"How dare you, I've never been treated in such a manner before! Today, I've truly witnessed your arrogance! Since this is the case, don't blame me for intruding!" Tian Xuzi was furious. As the true energy within his dantian revolved, his hair and beard suddenly started fluttering as well.

Waves of true energy encircled his body, as if a myriad of tiny

dragons were surrounding him.

Bang!

Tian Xuzi's eyes hardened as he suddenly pushed his hand forward. His palm filled with true energy heavily struck the door boards covering the entrance of the store.

As the resulting shock wave spread into the surroundings, its intensity caused the expressions of many of those present to change.

The cultivation level of this Tian Xuzi... was indeed living up to his name!

However, right after many of them exclaimed at the level of his cultivation, their expressions became increasingly strange. The naive Ye Ziling even failed to hold in her laughter and burst out laughing.

The mood suddenly became rather awkward.

Even though Tian Xuzi caused a powerful shock wave when he struck the door board, it did not damage them in the slightest. The entrance of the store was still tightly shut.

Tian Xuzi's hair and beard were both hovering. His eyes were widened and his hand was still pressed against a door board. He was wavering on whether to lower his hand or not...

He said he was going to intrude into the store... and the result was he could not even get through the entrance. It was simply a slap in the face. Furthermore, it was of his own making.

Tian Xuzi pulled back his hand and cleared his throat. Tapping the ground with the tip of his toes, he rose into the air before backing away from the store.

As Tian Xuzi formed a sword-finger gesture with his hand, sword energy encircled his body and tore the air around him apart.

"I'll give you another chance. If you still don't come out... I'll

really be intruding!" Tian Xuzy unabashedly said.

The entrance of the store remained tightly shut and not a single sound was heard.

Tian Xuzy was maddened from the embarrassment. With a shout, he pointed forward with a sword-finger gesture and the myriad of sword energy encircling him flew toward the store.

Blacky, who was lying next to the entrance, opened its mouth and let out a yawn. It disinterestedly watched as the dazzling sword energy struck the door boards before rolling its eyes and going back to sleep.

A cloud of dust rose into the air. As a gust of wind blew past, it was gradually cleared away.

Tian Xuzy's eyes trembled and almost popped out from the shock...

"What the? Is this run-down store made from a turtle's shell? How is it still intact? Even if it's not broken... Can't you at least show some trace of damage?! Is there a need to be so ruthless?!"

Tian Xuzy felt as if he was just fucked by a dog. The strength of this move was already quite powerful. Even the city gates of the imperial city would have been smashed open. However, when used on the entrance of this store... he could not even scratch the wooden boards!

"Haha! Tian Xuzy, have you weakened from old age? How did you even fail to break a few wooden boards?!"

"The skill of Tian Xuzy is impressive indeed. The wooden boards are still spotless after such an attack, how impressive!"

"Elder sister Ni Yan... Is this old man stupid?"

...

As Tian Xuzy listened to the chattering and the unrestrained jeering in the background, he suddenly felt as if his heart was

pierced by an invisible arrow...

While everyone was busy mocking him, the humiliated Tian Xuzi was almost ready to unsheathe the longsword on his back. However, just before he was going to prepare an attack with all of his strength, one of the door boards covering the store's entrance was removed.

The moment when the door board was removed, an even more powerful aroma drifted out. This wine aroma was like a poison that caused everyone to fall into a state of euphoria.

An uninhibited figure was holding a porcelain cup in his hand while leaning on a door board. He was looking at them with a drunk expression.

"Burp... Who's the one knocking on my door in the middle of the night?"

Bu Fang's face was flushed, but his expression was extremely stern. This conflicting appearance created a strange image. He was wearing a robe with his chest area wide open, seemingly because he was feeling stuffy.

As the wine aroma wafted out from inside the store, Tian Xuzi's eyes locked onto the porcelain cup in Bu Fang's hand.

"A fine wine! This is definitely a fine wine! The finest wine that I've ever encountered in my life!" Tian Xuzi exclaimed.

Hovering above the porcelain cup in Bu Fang's hand, a dense mass of spirit energy was forming into three clouds.

"This is naturally a fine wine. However, you haven't answered my question yet. Are you the one knocking on my door in the middle of the night?" Bu Fang gave Tian Xuzi a glance while leaning on a door board.

"That's right, I came here to purchase your wine. I wish your distinguished self would grant my request," Tian Xuzi excitedly said.

Bu Fang raised his eyebrows. He lifted up the porcelain cup and gently shook the cup in front of everyone...

"Are you talking about the... wine in this cup?" Bu Fang softly asked.

As Bu Fang flaunted the cup before them, the aroma of the wine inside the cup assaulted their senses and their eyes all lit up.

Meanwhile, the ones who were familiar with Bu Fang all had strange expressions on their faces...

The corners of their mouths twitched as they watched the disheveled Bu Fang. Was this titillating person really the Owner Bu that they knew? Even though that expressionless face was still the same, his actions were simply... painful to watch.

Was Owner Bu... drunk?

"That's right!" Tian Xuze swallowed his saliva. The wine bug in his stomach was already ensnared by the aroma.

A smile appeared on Bu Fang's lips as he looked at Tian Xuze. Then, under Tian Xuze's stunned gaze, he finished the cup of wine in a single gulp.

Bu Fang bared his teeth and exclaimed, "Slurp, ahh! What a fine wine!"

Tian Xuze felt as if his heart was cut apart by a knife. He thought, "This fellow... he's doing this on purpose!"

Bu Fang lightly breathed out and said, "Today's opening hours has already ended. No dishes will be sold tonight... including alcohol."

Tian Xuze's expression turned cold and he said, "I am telling you to sell your wine, so you should just sell it! Don't waste my time with your nonsense!"

Within the Void Sword Pavillion and even the entire Light Wind Empire, there was no one who dared to talk to him in such a

manner. Even if he drank wine without paying, no one would dare to say anything.

However, this store owner before him actually dared to be so arrogant...

With sword energy surrounding him, Tian Xuzi stepped forward and appeared before Bu Fang in the blink of an eye.

"Those who dared to make a fool of me have long since turned into bones. Brat... do you have a death wish?"

With extremely overbearing words and surging waves of sword energy, at that moment, Tian Xuzi was fully displaying the might of the Void Sword Pavillion's grandmaster.

Meanwhile, Bu Fang was calmly leaning against a wooden board while holding the porcelain wine cup with two fingers. As he let out a burp once more, a rich wine aroma filled the air.

Behind him, two beams of red light lit up and Whitey's chubby figure appeared.

Gazing at Tian Xuzi, who was almost within arm's reach, Bu Fang wrinkled his nose as he looked at the other party's dazzling white beard and hair.

"I've already said that the opening hours is over. Are you trying to cause trouble? In that case, you'll have to bear the consequences."

Chapter 199: Whitey, You've Become Incredible

"If you're going to cause trouble, you'll have to bear the consequences," Bu Fang serenely said before letting out a burp.

He was leaning his shoulder against the door board while holding a porcelain wine cup with two fingers. His expressionless face was flushed from the alcohol and his eyes half-closed from tipsiness appeared very flirtatious.

Tian Xuzi's face immediately scrunched together when he smelled the burp. He took a few steps backward and coldly glared at Bu Fang.

Then, a cold smile appeared on his lips as his hair and beard started fluttering and sword energy appeared behind him.

"So what if I am going to cause trouble? If I don't get to drink this wine tonight, I'll tear down your store!" Tian Xuzi said. As he formed a sword-finger gesture with his hand, the longsword on his back emitted a melodious trill and shot out of its scabbard. It flew around a few times in the air before stopping above his head.

The blade of the sword was extremely dazzling. In the darkness, it was eye-catching like a sparkling starlight.

This was the Void Sword Pavillion's secret technique, the Sword Manipulation Technique.

Meanwhile, the corners of Xiao Yue's mouth were twitching as he watched Tian Xuzi exhibit the Sword Manipulation Technique. Looking at Tian Xuzi, who was itching to start the fight, Xiao Yue did not know whether to laugh or cry. He immediately realized Tian Xuzi did not gather information before coming to the imperial city and clearly knew very little about Fang Fang's Little Store.

Xiao Meng had received the short end of the stick at this store

before, so why would Owner Bu even fear a seventh grade Battle-Saint?

On the other hand, Ni Yan was watching the confrontation with much interest. Her charming eyes were slightly widened with expectation as she gazed at the plump figure of Whitey stepping out from behind Bu Fang.

"This puppet... is very interesting," Ni Yan thought. She had never seen a puppet capable of going against a seventh grade Battle-Saint. "Looks like I'll get to witness something entertaining today."

"Elder sister Ni Yan, aren't we going to help him? That Tian Xuzi is a seventh grade Battle-Saint but Owner Bu seems to be just a fifth grade Battle-King... Wouldn't he get butchered at this rate?" Ye Ziling asked in bewilderment.

Her eyes were wide with confusion as she looked toward Ni Yan who appeared to be looking forward to a good show.

"It's fine, that old man isn't going to die," Ni Yan replied while patting Ye Ziling's head.

"...Elder sister Ni Yan, you've got it wrong. I am saying that store owner might be in danger. A Battle-Saint is still quite powerful," Ye Ziling earnestly said.

Ni Yan glanced at this young girl whose earnestness contained a trace of childlike-adorableness and could not help but let out a chuckle. She said, "It's fine, that old man... really won't die."

Ye Ziling was dumbfounded by her reply.

Xiao Meng appeared unworried as well. He was standing there with his hands behind his back. He thought this was a good chance for him to check out how powerful the grandmaster of the Void Sword Pavillion was. Back then, he went toe to toe against Whitey. If Tian Xuzi could also achieve the same feat, he would have to view him as a serious opponent.

The thirteen bandits of Mozhou were intently watching the confrontation between Tian Xuzhi and Bu Fang with excited smiles filled with intrigue.

The man dressed in red clothing, Mu Lingfeng, was leaning against the walls of the alleyway while playing with his slender fingers as he serenely watched the fight that seemingly could begin at any moment.

Bu Fang smacked his lips as he recalled the captivating flavors of the wine. Then, he straightened his back and tidied his clothes. He turned around and gently patted Whitey's belly. He said, "Just strip the troublemakers and throw them out.

"Everyone, today's opening hours is already over. If anyone wishes to taste the wine, please queue up earlier tomorrow. Our store doesn't provide any services after business hours."

Bu Fang's figure gradually disappeared into the darkness of the store. However, that indifferent voice of his soon drifted out from the store and resounded in the ears of everyone present.

All of their expressions slightly changed. Come earlier... tomorrow?

Some of them even sneered, apparently holding Bu Fang's words in contempt and disdain. Who did he think he was? Letting a bunch of seventh grade Battle-Saints patiently wait until opening hours?

Even the emperor... did not have the capability to do such a thing!

"Hehe, queue up tomorrow? If your storefront is destroyed tonight, there's no need to queue up tomorrow." Standing together with the rest of the thirteen bandits, the seventh master sneered as he watched the imposing Tian Xuzi.

When Tian Xuzi saw Bu Fang was ignoring him and going back into the store, he immediately flew into a rage. When was he, the

world-renowned Tian Xuze, ever ignored in such a manner? This young man was simply too cocky!

"Arrogant brat, do you really think a mere puppet could stop me? How foolish!"

With a roar, Tian Xuze pointed forward with a sword-finger gesture and the flying sword turned into a stream of light. As Tian Xuze stepped forward, spectral figures encircled with sword energy appeared everywhere in an instant and charged toward the store. Their target was Bu Fang.

Whitey was standing in their path with its bulging belly and its mechanical eyes were flashing red. As the red beams emitting from its eyes scanned its surroundings, the seventh master hiding within the crowd shivered. He suddenly remembered some unpleasant memories.

The entire area was filled with sword energy and spectral figures. Tian Xuze was moving extremely fast and attempted to get past Whitey in an instant.

Tian Xuze's cultivation level was very high. His move caused the crowd to draw in a breath of cold air and their expressions to become serious. A Battle-Saint adept in the way of the sword was definitely fearsome in combat.

Even Xiao Meng would feel some pressure while facing this attack.

Meanwhile, Ni Yan was pursing her lips. This flashy move was so showy that it gave her goosebumps. However, she had to admit... it was formidable indeed.

"Elder sister Ni Yan..." When Ye Ziling saw Tian Xuze performing this move, she looked toward Ni Yan once more to enquire whether they should intervene.

Nonetheless, Ni Yan still shook her head. However, the serious expression on her face indicated that she was wavering as well.

Tian Xuzi's figure appeared extremely imperceptible. Surrounded with sword energy, he was attempting to sneak into the store. He was very confident of himself. After all, he was performing the Sword Manipulation Technique. Whether in combat or fleeing, he was so fast that his enemies could not keep up with him. He was confident that a mere puppet would not be able to block him.

"That arrogant brat, I'll definitely teach him a lesson. I'll let him know that the strong must be respected!" Tian Xuzi thought with a sneer.

Bang!

Suddenly, as a sound rang out, the sword energy filling the entire area completely disappeared in an instant.

A longsword fell onto the ground with a loud clatter.

Tian Xuzi's expression stiffened and his eyes were filled with disbelief. His ghostly figure was swiftly moving as he attempted to get past Whitey. However, his entire body suddenly started trembling. In his eyes, a gigantic metallic palm was swiftly becoming larger.

Bang!

Tian Xuzi's head slammed right into the Whitey's palm. During the moment of collision, all sorts of complicated feelings suddenly flooded his mind.

"God damn..."

Tian Xuzi's swiftly moving figure suddenly came to a halt and was sent flying by a tremendous force. His body somersaulted in the air before violently smashing into the ground. He was even pushed quite a distance away by the remaining force...

Embarrassment and silence filled the area...

The atmosphere suddenly became rather strange.

The eyes of the crowd were filled with disbelief as they stared at

the sorry figure of Tian Xuzi groaning on the ground while clutching his nose. When they looked at the chubby Whitey once more, their faces... looked as if they had just saw a dog biting a lion to death.

Ye Ziling's adorable eyes were wide open and her rosy lips were parted enough that an egg could almost fit in her mouth.

Ni Yan had a smile on her face as she breathed a sigh of relief. As she expected, Owner Bu was not being brainless but instead had the means to back up his words.

Even though she did not know how much of a coincidence was involved in that scene just now, sending a Battle-Saint flying with a single blow... Whitey, you've become incredible!

Ni Yan was elated.

Tian Xuzi got up from the ground while clutching his nose. Just a moment ago, his nose made an intimate contact with Whitey's metallic palm. The feeling of colliding into something with his nose at such a speed made him feel like crying...

He was furious. He was completely enraged. If he was only looking to punish that arrogant brat previously, then his only desire right now was tearing apart this mechanical puppet that humiliated him.

His carelessness nearly caused a humiliating defeat. This was simply... mortifying!

Buzz!

With a humming noise, the longsword that fell onto the ground flew toward Tian Xuzi and hovered in front of him. His expression became grave and tiny swords were seemingly moving about in his eyes. Then, with a gentle flick of the sword-finger gesture, the longsword started duplicating. It turned into two, then two turned into four, four turned into a bunch...

Countless amount of longswords were hovering in front of him.

Attack, my swords!

Chapter 200: The Clothes Are Gone, Forget About the Wine!

Bu Fang staggered back into the kitchen. As he let out a light breath, the rich smell of alcohol spread from his mouth.

Having drank two cups of wine, Bu Fang felt all tipsy and lightheaded. He had to admit that this new wine was much stronger than the Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine.

He put away the rest of the wine jars in the kitchen, leaving out only three white jade wine jars. In these jars was the newly brewed spirit wine, which fragrance had engulfed half of the Imperial City.

The three white jade wine jars were carefully lidded, sealing the rich wine aroma within the wine jar themselves to prevent it from further dissipating. Bu Fang patted the white jade wine jars and licked his own lips. The scent of alcohol once again gushed out of his mouth.

Gazing at these white jade wine jars, Bu Fang fell into a deep contemplation. It was time to name the wine...

A spirit wine brewed with three types of seventh grade spirit herbs... maybe call it, Three Treasures Wine? Bu Fang quickly shook his head. This name sounded awfully gawky, and it would devalue the wine.

"One sip fills the mouth with burning flames, once swallowed it becomes cold as blades of ice... how about Frost Blaze Wine? Nope, still too unsophisticated, perhaps Frost Blaze Path-Understanding Wine? Hmm... let's go with Frost Blaze Path-Understanding Brew."

Bu Fang rubbed his chin as he mulled over this, but his heart was indeed fervent. The Frost Blaze Path-Understanding Brew had easily surpassed the Ice Heart Jade Urn Wine. He wondered how it might compare with the Dragon's Breath?

Bu Fang's knowledge of the Dragon's Breath rested on Ni Yan's

description. He hadn't personally tasted the Dragon's Breath himself, and so he was unable to make a valid judgement.

"System, is it possible to test whether the Frost Blaze Path-Understanding Brew or the Dragon's Breath is more superior?" Bu Fang asked the system in great anticipation.

However, the system remained silent for a while before solemnly replying him: "The comparison needs to be made by someone who has tasted Dragon's Breath. Thus, the host is unable to complete the temporary assignment at this stage. Please continue trying hard. However, the Frost Blaze Path-Understanding Brew has been successfully recorded, and so the price valuation has begun..."

The system's reply exceeded Bu Fang's expectations, leaving him slightly dumbfounded.

Must the comparison be made by someone who has tasted the Dragon's Breath? It caused Bu Fang to wrinkle his brows.

Not after long, he relaxed his brows and curled the corners of his lips. There was one person in the Imperial City who had drank the Dragon's Breath before. That was Ni Yan, which meant that the judgement could be issued once she came by on the following day to try the Frost Blaze Path-Understanding Brew.

The System was still working on the price valuation. Bu Fang didn't have a clue over how it would turn out. However, he was clear on one thing: it certainly wouldn't be cheap.

The results wouldn't be in for quite a while, and Bu Fang was also drowsy from the wine. He yawned, walked out of the kitchen, and got ready to close up and withdraw upstairs.

...

Whitey stood by the store like an unshakeable mountain. A red light flickered continuously in its mechanic eyes.

A thick rain of swords fell before Tian Xuizi. These shadows of blades were all generated from the sword in his hand.

Tian Xuzi's face was grave. Dark red blood trickled out of his nose and stained his white beard...

"Behead this robotic puppet!"

With a light snarl, Tian Xuzi concentrated hard and released waves of true energy from his body. Clink, clank. The shadows of blades whistled and charged toward Whitey.

The shadows covered the sky, almost metamorphosing into a shower of swords. Its density made one's hair stand on ends and one's heart shudder uncontrollably.

Amidst the rainstorm of blades was Tian Xuzi's vigor of sword. That was a seventh grade Battle-Saint's vigor of sword, a mighty, formidable and rare one. It poured down in a way that nearly crumbled the city gates. An ordinary seventh grade Battle-Saint wouldn't even have the guts to resist this move.

This move... was plainly terrifying.

Those nearby were in awe. They now had considerable awareness of Tian Xuzi's brooding strength.

Whitey's plump body seemed so tiny amidst the torrent of blades, as if a single boat on the vast sea, just waiting to be overturned by the tides.

A robotic sound suddenly rang in the air. Whitey's mechanic eyes raised up and emitted a red beam over the shower of blades.

At that moment, the dense torrent of blades had completely engulfed it.

"Hahaha! Crush it for good!" Tian Xuzi roared with laughter. He wiped away the blood dripping from his nose, absorbed by elation.

Suddenly, his hearty laughter stopped short.

This was because, right before him, the rainstorm of blades were being swallowed by a bottomless pit, and continued to thin out.

Not after long, only a few shadows of blades were left.

The incredible show of force had abruptly reduced to a sorry sight.

Tian Xuzi's eyeballs bulged as he glared at Whitey. Extending out a finger, he couldn't stop shuddering... Damn it, why was there such an intimidating puppet in this world.

Whitey's mechanic eyes flashed red once more, and the delicate metal sword in its hands was instantly bent out of shape. With a crack, the blade was completely broken...

That crispy sound reverberated in the alleyway once so quiet that one could hear a pin drop.

In that moment, everyone in the crowd took in a chilled breath. Tian Xuzi spat out a mouthful of blood and retreated a few steps in dejection. His body couldn't stop trembling.

That was a spirit sword he had created with essence blood. Who would have thought that the robotic puppet before him could... simply crush it!

Tian Xuzi even felt his kidney twitch. He felt weak as never before.

"Troublemaker, you will be stripped as an example to others."

Whitey's robotic voice rang. Nobody understood what that meant, and were all taken back.

The seventh master hiding among the spectators recognized this familiar, nightmare-like sound. His entire body shuddered and shivered in fear.

Again... not again! A demon obsessed with stripping others!

Whitey threw the broken sword in its hands onto the floor. Its palms lifted up, and with a whir, extended outwards. They rested above Tian Xuzi and simply lifted him up by the head.

That was a palm that could crumple a spirit sword...

The bystanders felt their brains freeze. If that palm even exerted

a tiny bit of force—mind one that Tian Xuze's brain was certainly not sturdier than the spirit sword—the consequences would naturally be... hard to digest.

But the reality wasn't what those in the crowd had envisioned, even though that sight would have been too hard to bear.

Rip!!

Tian Xuze felt a chill breeze around his body. The robe he wore was torn apart by the metallic lump...

Oh my gosh! What did this metallic lump want? Has it lost its mind, unwilling to even let an old chap go?!

The seventh master's teeth chattered. This was a familiar sight, one that was eye-blinding... and fully evoked the pain in his heart!

Whitey's red beam scanned across Tian Xuze's naked body, then its arms swung and flung Tian Xuze away. He was like a bean bun tossed far away, kicking up the dust on the ground.

Ni Yan blinked her eyes and quickly covered Ye Ziling's eyes, "You little girl, don't look."

The Thirteen Bandits felt a pain shoot up their teeth as they wheezed one after another. Damn it, exactly as what the seventh master had said... This metallic lump was a demon obsessed with stripping others. It wouldn't kill you, but it wanted to strip you naked, now that was messed up!

Tian Xuze crawled up from the floor. As the wind blew by, his balls felt oh so cold. His old, saggy face became paler than ever. He had effectively snapped out of the temptation of fine wine. The clothes were gone, forget about the wine!

The metallic lump of a puppet before his eyes was a fierce warrior. That, alas, was the trump card of the store... no wonder it could possess a Five Stripes Path-Understanding Tree. Turns out it had a puppet that could singlehandedly strip a seventh grade Battle-Saint. It was plainly terrifying.

Tian Xuze no longer had the face to stay there. He waved his hand and numerous swords appeared in his hands. With a flick of a finger, these long swords covered the lower part of his body and began spinning, as if forming a skirt... but at least it succeeded in screening off the eye-blinding sight.

Xiao Yue was stunned. The elder of the Void Sword Pavilion lived up to his name. He knew how to have fun!

The light tap of footsteps rang. The tipsiness has yet to fade from Bu Fang's complexion. He walked to the entrance, flicked a gaze at the bare naked Tian Xuze attempting to cover himself with rotating swords, and curled his lips.

Patting Whitey's fat belly, Bu Fang said coolly: "We are closed. If you want wine, come back earlier tomorrow and line up..."

"Oh, there is a limited amount of wine. First come, first served."

Bu Fang stated calmly. Whitey turned around, returned to the store and stepped into the kitchen. Bu Fang reached for the shutters and closed them before the dumbstruck crowd.

Having shut the door, Bu Fang felt his eyelids struggle in a battle. He was far too sleepy. Emitting another breath that was still rich with the scent of alcohol, he returned to his room on the second floor. After a bath, he climbed onto his bed and fell into a deep sleep.

There was a limited amount of wine, first come, first served... this announcement caused many to avert their eyes. They left one after another, each immersed in their own thoughts.

It seemed like this wine... could only be tasted tomorrow.

Try to snatch it by force? Tian Xuze's eyesore of a spectacle was still vivid in their minds. They were not idiots, and naturally wouldn't consider making a move against Whitey, the demon clearly obsessed with stripping others.

"Let's go. Tonight's show has ended. Let's get here early

tomorrow to drink the wine," Ni Yan said as she patted Ye Ziling's head. Afterwards, she pulled the latter after her and left the alleyway.